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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

MARIA, DOLCE MARIA

CACCINI
GLETLE
BÖDDECKER
FRESCOBALDI
MERULA
KAPSBERGER
SANCES
MONTEVERDI

Wendy Roobol *soprano*
Arjen Verhage *theorbo*
Cassandra Luckhardt *viola da gamba*
Krijn Koetsveld *organ and harpsichord*

Maria, Dolce Maria

Francesca Caccini 1587-1640

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Wendy Roobol *soprano*

Arjen Verhage *theorbo*
Cassandra Luckhart *viola da gamba*
Krijn Koetsveld *organ and harpsichord*

Maria, dolce Maria

Holy Virgin, Our Dear Lady, Mother of God, or just Mary? Who is this woman, who for so many is a source of comfort and inspiration? What do we know about her? And why does she stir our imagination so much?

For many centuries, Mary has been a source of inspiration for artists. She is the most depicted person on Earth, and no other woman has as frequently been the subject of devotional songs as she is.

We can partly trace her life through religious scriptures, but many of the stories about her life are products of myth formation.

Life

Mary was supposedly born as the daughter of Joachim and Anna. One day she is visited by the angel Gabriel, who announces to her that she will bear a son, whom she must call Jesus and who will be the Son of God. The angel also tells her that her cousin Elisabeth is pregnant. Mary hurries to Elisabeth, who greets her with the words: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (*Ave Maria*). Maria responds with the Song of Praise to God (*Magnificat*).

Emperor Augustus decrees that a census shall be held, so Mary must join her husband Joseph to Bethlehem to be registered there. Here, Jesus is born in a stable. (*Natus est Jesus*). They are visited by shepherds and magi from the East, who have come to worship the baby. Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to safety in Egypt after having been warned by an angel that King Herod is planning to kill all boys under the age of 2.

When Jesus is 12, they visit Jerusalem. On their way back, Mary misses her son. She finds him in the temple, where he tells her: "Why did you look for me? Didn't you know I had to be in the house of my Father?"

From this point onwards, we only sporadically hear about Mary. She is present at the wedding in Kana, where Jesus turns water into wine, and on several occasions we hear about her when Jesus is preaching in the land.

Only when Jesus is crucified on Golgatha, she reappears. (*Stabat Mater*) She stands at the foot of his cross and mourns the death of her son (*Pianto della Madonna*).

When she herself dies, she is admitted to Heaven by God and crowned Queen of Heaven by her son Jesus (*Regina Caeli*).

Music

The number of 17th-century works dedicated to Mary is virtually beyond comprehension. Of course, many Mary hymns and other pieces were intended for liturgical use, but more often than not, she has been a source of inspiration for composers to present a more human side of her.

Maria, Dolce Maria by Caccini is an ode to the woman Mary, a love song. It testifies of a personal connection with her, fed by an intense religiosity.

The *Canzonetta Spirituale Sopra Alla Nanna* by Merula is a text sung by a worried mother. Mary is lulling her newborn son but already envisages his grisly fate. The simple bass part, which consists of just two notes, emphasizes both the lulling and the impending doom.

The *Pianto Della Madonna* by Monteverdi is a religious version of the only part of the lost opera *Ariane* which has been preserved: the *Lamento d'Ariane*. It largely follows the emotional intentions of the original lament, but this time it is Maria, who as a mother experiences a range of emotions after her son has died on the cross. In the original opera, this was an aria by Arianna, who mourns for Theseus.

There is an abundance of texts for liturgical use. Often, this 17th-century music is composed for large ensembles: choir, vocal soloists, an elaborate continuo group, strings and wind instruments. Nonetheless, all over Europe, this era has also seen composers who favoured the intimacy of a solo voice with accompaniment.

The *Magnificat* by Böödecker is an example of this, as is the *Stabat Mater* by Sances. Both pieces are extremely rich in expression, in spite of their limited scope.

An important element in the devotion to Mary is the pledge for intercession and protection. Both in the antiphone *Sub Tuum Praesidium* by Gletle and in the hymns *Sancta Maria* and *Ave Sanctissima Maria* by Kapsperger, Mary is revered as a saint but is close enough to man to act as a mediator between man and God and Jesus. The intimacy of the plea is emphasized by the setting: one voice with just one continuo instrument.

Salve, O Regina by Monteverdi is an adaptation of the original *Salve Regina* text, probably by Monteverdi himself. It is one of the five Mary antiphones (the others are *Alma Mater Redemptoris*, *Ave Regina Caelorum*, *Regina Caeli* and *Sub Tuum Praesidium*) and is prayed from the end of the Easter period until the beginning of the Advent period, after the last evening prayer and just before going to bed. This version by Monteverdi, with its virtuoso notes, chromaticism, harmonic twists and eventual tranquillity, is a highlight in the 17th-century repertoire of works dedicated to Mary.

Mary as a source of inspiration

Although secularisation is currently pervasive, Mary remains as popular as ever.

Mary connects: not only within Christianity she is a prominent figure, but also within Islam she plays an important role. Her name even appears more frequently in the Quran than in the Bible.

Within Buddhism, Guanyin, the goddess of comfort and mercy, has a function similar as Mary's within Christianity. The goddess Isis from Egyptian mythology bears a striking resemblance to the Christian Mary.

Mary belongs to all of us, religious or not. She attends to the people as a symbol of femininity, consolation, forgiveness, strength and gentleness. A primal mother, to whom you appeal for protection and who unconditionally loves you. And doesn't every human being yearn for that?

So it may not be that remarkable that after all these centuries she is still so much alive.

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SUNG TEXTS

1. **Maria, Dolce Maria** (from: Il Primo libro delle Musische a una e due voci)

Francesca Caccini (1587-1640)

Maria, dolce Maria, nome soave tanto,
Che'n pronunziarti imparadisi core,
Nome sacro e santo,
Ch'el cor m'infiammi di celeste amore
Maria, mai se pr'io canto,
Ne può la lingua mia più felice parola,
Trarmi dal sen già mai che dir,
Che dir Maria.
Nome ch'ogni dolor temprà, e consola,
Voce tranquilla, ch'ogni affanno acqueta,
Ch'ogni cor fa serena, ogn'alma lieta.

Mary, sweet Mary, name so gentle
That pronouncing it imparadises my heart.
Name sacred and holy
That it enflames my heart with celestial love
Mary, never as long as I sing
Can my tongue a happier word
Pull from my breas than to say
Mary.
Name that tempers and consoles every sorrow,
Voice so tranquil that it calms every worry,
That it makes every heart serene, every soul content

2. **Regina Caeli** (from: Il Primo Libro delle musiche a una e due voci)

Francesca Caccini (1587-1640)

Regina caeli laetare
Alleluia
Quia quem meruisti portare
Alleluia
Resurrexit sicut dixit
Alleluia
Ora pro nobis Deum
Alleluia

Queen of Heaven, rejoice
Alleluia
The Son whom you merited to bear
Alleluia
Has risen, as he said
Alleluia
Pray for us to God
Alleluia

3. **Ave Maria I** (from: Expeditiones musicae classis V)

Johann Melchior Gletle (1626-1683)

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, Benedicta
tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.
Sancta Maria mater Dei
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in ora mortis nostrae.
Amen

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou among women
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God
Pray for us sinners
Now and in the hour of our death.
Amen

4. **Sub Tuum Praesidium XIV** (from: Expeditionis musicae classis V)

Johann Melchior Gletle (1626-1683)

Sub tuum praesidium confugimus,
Sancta Dei Genitrix.
Nostras deprecationes ne despicias
In necessitatibus nostris,
Sed a periculis cunctis
Libera nos semper
Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.
Domina nostra, mediatrix nostra,
Advocata nostra
Tuo filio nos reconcilia
Tuo filio nos commenda,
Tuo filio nos repraesenta.

We fly to Thy protection,
O Holy Mother of God.
Do not despise our petitions
In our necessities,
But deliver us always
From all dangers
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.
Our mistress, our intermediary
our Advocate
reconcile us
commend us,
intercede for us with your Son

5. **Magnificat** (from: Sacra partitura)
Philipp Friedrich Böhdecker (1607-1683)

Magnificat anima mea Dominum
Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ:
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes
generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est,
et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus
eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes,
Suscepit Israel puerum suum recordatus misericordiae
suæ,
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in sæcula.

Gloria Patri, Gloria filio et Spiritui Sancto,

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et semper et
in secula seculorum,
Amen.

6. **Natus est Jesus** (from: Sacra Partitura)
Philipp Friedrich Böhdecker (1607-1683)

Natus est Jesus,
natus est Deus,
natus est salvator noster. Venite laeti.
Joseph, lieber Joseph mein, bring mir her die
Windelein, dass ich's Kindlein lege drein, und fein
sanft es schlafe ein. Ei, Joseph.

My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
Because He hath regarded the humility of His slave:
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call
me blessed.
Because He that is mighty hath done great things to
me; and holy is His name.
And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to
them that fear Him.
He hath shewed might in His arm:
He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their
heart.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and
hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the
rich He hath sent empty away.
He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of
His mercy:
As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his
seed for ever.
Glory be the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
forever and ever,
Amen.

Jesus is born,
God is born,
our saviour is born. Come with joy.
Joseph my dear Joseph bring me swaddling where I
can lay the child and put it gently to sleep. Behold,
Joseph.

Venite omnes,
portate munera,
offerte laudes,
venite dico venite omnes et cum laetitia cantate.

Joseph, trag das Kindelein bis ich mach das Bettelein,
küss und herz das Jesulein. Eia.
O altitudo.
O dulcis Virgo,
o pulchra Mater,
tu peperisti splendorum nostrum.

Joseph, gib das Kindelein,
dass ich's leg in das Krippelein. Nun schlaf, mein
liebes Kindelein, Gott, der will dein Vater sein.
Eia, eia.

O Jesu parvule,
Jesu dulcissime,
laude dignissime,
Rex gloriosissime,
da nos laudemus te
et cantemus in aeternum: Alleluia.

7. **Canzonetta Spirituale sopra alla Nanna** (from: Curtio Precipitato)
Tarquinio Merula (1594-1665)

Hor ch'è tempo di dormire
Dormi dormi figlio e non vagire,
Perchè, tempo ancor verrà
Che vagir bisognerà
Deh ben mio deh cor mio fa,
Fa la ninna ninna na

Chiudi, quei lumi divini
come fan gl'altri bambini,
Perchè tosto oscuro velo
Priverà di lume il cielo
Deh ben mio....

Come everyone,
bring gifts,
offer praises,
come, I say unto you, come and sing with joy.

Joseph, hold the little child until I have made his little
bed, kiss and cuddle little Jesus. Behold.
O most high.
O gentle virgin,
O beauteous mother,
you have given birth to him who shines on us.

Joseph, give me the little child that I may lay him in
the manger. Now sleep dear little child
for you are the son of God, Behold.

O little Jesus,
sweetest Jesus,
most worthy to be praised,
most glorious king,
let us praise thee
and sing for ever: Halleluja.

The time is now come to sleep,
Sleep, sleep my son and do not cry,
For the time will yet come
When you will have to cry.
So my dear, so my heart
Go to sleep.

Shut those divine eyes
As other children do,
For soon a thick veil
Will deprive the sky of light.
Oh, my love, oh, my sweet

Over prendi questo latte
Dalle mie mammelle intatte
Perchè ministro crudele
Ti prepara aceto e fiele
Deh ben mio...

Amor mio sia questo petto
Hor per te morbido letto
Pria che rendi ad alta voce
L'alma al Padre su la croce
Deh ben mio....

Posa hor queste membra belle
Vezzose e tenerelle
Perchè poi ferri e catene
Gli daran acerbe pene
Deh ben mio...

Queste mani e questi piedi
Ch'or con gusto e gaudio vedi
Ahimè com'in varii modi
Passeran acuti chiodi

Questa faccia gratiosa
Rubiconda hor più di rosa
Sputi e schiaffi sporcheranno
Con tormento e grand'affanno

Ah con quanto tuo dolore
Sola speme del mio core
Questo capo e questi crini
Passeran acuti spini

Ah ch'in questo divin petto
Amor mio dolce diletto
Vi farà piaga mortale
Empia lancia e disleale

Dormi dunque figliol mio
Dormi pur redentor mio

Or take this milk
From my unsullied breasts,
For the cruel minister
Prepares for you vinegar and gall.
So my dear...

My love, let this soft breast
Be a soft bed for you
Before aloud commending your soul
To your Father on the cross
Oh, my love...

Stretch out, then those sweet little limbs.
So sweet and so tender,
For later irons and chains
Will inflict cruel pains on them.
So my dear...

Those hands and those feet
Which you now look on with pleasure and joy,
Alas, in what a way will sharp nails
pass through them.

That gracious face,
Ruddier than a rose,
Will be fouled with spit and blows
In torment and pain.

Oh, with what pain,
Only hope of my heart,
Will this head and this hair
Be pierced by sharp thorns

Oh, to think that in this heavenly breast,
my love sweet and tender,
An ungodly and treacherous lance
Will inflict a mortal wound.

Sleep then my son,
Sleep you who is also my redeemer.

Perchè poi con lieto viso
Ci vedrem in Paradiso

Hor che dorme la mia vita
Del mio cor gioa compita
Taccia ognun con puro zelo
Taccian sin la terra e'l Cielo

E fra tanto io che farò
Il mio ben contemplerò
Ne starò col capo chino
Sin che dorme il mio Bambino

8. *Sancta Maria* (from: Libro Primo di Mottetti Passeggiati a una voce) *Giovanni Girolamo Kapsperger (1580-1651)*

Sancta Maria, succure miseris
Iuva pusillanimes, refove flebiles
Ora pro populo interveni pro clero
Intercede pro devoto femineo sexu:
Sentiant omnes tuum iuvamen,
Quicumque celebrant tuam sanctam festivitatem

9. *Ave Sanctissima Maria* (from: Libro Primo di Mottetti Passeggiati a una voce) *Giovanni Girolamo Kapsperger (1580-1651)*

Ave sanctissima Maria, Mater Dei,
Porta paradisi, Domina mundi,
Pura singularis:
Tu es Virgo,
Tu concepisti Jesum sine peccato,
Tu peperisti creatorum et Salvatorem mundi

In quo non dubito:
Libera me ab omni malo,
Et ora pro peccatis meis.

Because with happy faces
We shall see each other in Paradise.

Now you are sleeping, my life,
Joy of my heart
Let all be hushed with pure devotion
Let heaven and earth fall silent

And I, meanwhile, what will I do?
I will contemplate my dear,
And I will stay with my head bowed
While my child sleeps.

Holy Mary, be thou a help tot he helpless,
Strength to the fearful, comfort to the sorrowful
Pray for the people, plead for the clergy
Intercede for all holy woman consecrated to God:
May all who keep thy sacred commemoration feel the
might of thine assistance.

Hail, Most Holy Mary, Mother of God
Gate of paradise, Lady of this world,
Uniquely pure:
You are the Virgin,
Without sin you conceived Jesus;
You brought forth the Creator and Savior of the
world;
Of this, I do not doubt.
Free me from all evil,
And pray for my sins.

10. **Stabat Mater** (from: Motetti 1636)
Giovanni Felice Sances (ca. 1600-1679)

Stabat mater dolorosa
iuxta Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta,
mater Unigeniti!

Quae mœrebat et dolebat,
Et tremebat cum videbat
nati pœnas incliti.

Quis est homo qui non fletet,
Christi Matrem si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Piam matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis
vidit Iesum in tormentis,
et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
moriendo desolatum,
dum emisit spiritum.

Eia Mater, fons amoris
me sentire vim doloris
fac, ut tecum lugeam.

The sorrowful Mother stood
Tearful, close to the Cross,
From which her Son was hanging.

Her mourning soul,
Sad and grieving,
Was pierced by a sword.

O how sad and afflicted
Was that, highly blessed,
Mother of the only-begotten One.

She mourned and grieved,
The pious Mother, as she saw
The torments of her glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
If he were to see the Mother of Christ
In such agony ?

Who would not be sorrowful
Were he to contemplate Christ's Mother,
Grieving with her Son?

For the sins of His people,
She saw Jesus subjected
To torments and scourges.

She saw her sweet Son
Dying in desolation,
As He delivered His Spirit.

O thou Mother, fount of love,
Make me feel the force of pain,
So that I may grieve with thee.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum
ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.

Tui nati vulnerati,
tam dignati pro me pati,
pœnas mecum divide.

Fac me vere tecum flere,
crucifixo condolere,
donec ego vixero.

Iuxta Crucem tecum stare,
Te libenter sociare
in planctu desidero.

Virgo virginum præclara,
mihi iam non sis amara,
fac me tecum plangere.

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis eius sortem
et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce hac inebriari,
Ob amorem filii

Inflammatum et accensum,
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die iudicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri
Morte Christi præmuniri
Confoveri gratia.

Quando corpus morietur,
fac, ut animæ donetur
paradisi gloria. Amen.

Make my heart burn
With the love for Jesus Christ
So that I may be pleasing to Him.

Holy Mother, bring this to pass,
Place the wounds of the Crucified One
Firmly onto my heart.

Of thy injured Son,
Who deigned to suffer for my sake,
Let me share the pains.

Make me piously weep with thee,
Grieving with the Crucified One,
So that I may truly live.

To stand with thee by the Cross,
And share with thee
Thy mourning is what I desire.

Virgin of virgins, eminent,
Do not be harsh with me, now,
Let me share thy tears.

Let me bear the death of Christ,
Be espoused to His Passion,
And carry His wounds.

Wound me with His every wound,
Inebriate me with His Cross,
And the Blood of thy Son.

I pray that I will not be without defense
From the flames on Judgment Day,
Thanks to thy intercession, o Virgin.

Let me be guarded by the cross
Armed by Christ's death
And His grace cherish me

When my body dies,
Let to my soul be given,
The glory of Paradise. Amen.

11. Il Pianto della Madonna (from: Selva morale e spirituale SV 288)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Iam moriar mi Fili.
Quis nam poterit mater consolari
in hoc fero dolore; in hoc tam duro tormento?
Iam moriar mi Fili.
Mi Jesu, O Jesu mi sponse,
mi dilecte, mea spes, mea vita,
me deferis heu, vulnus cordis mei.
Respice Jesu mi, precor,
respice matrem tuam
quae gemendo pro te pallida languet,
atque in morte funesto in hoc tam dura
et tam immani Cruce, tecum petit affigi.
Mi Jesu, O Jesu mi, O potens homo, o Deus,
cuius pectores, heu, tanti doloris
quo torquetur Maria;
miserere gementis, tecumquae extinta sit,
quae per te vixit.
Sed promptus ex hac vita discendis O mi Fili,
et ego hic ploro;
tu confringes infernum hoste victo superbo,
et ego relinquor, preda doloris, solitaria et mesta.
Te Pater almus, te quae fons amoris suscipiant laeti,
et ego te non videbo.

O Pater, O mi sponse!
Haec sunt promissa Archangeli Gabrielis?
Haec illa excelsa sedes antiqui Patris David?
Sunt haec regalia scepra quae tibi cingant crines,
haec ne sunt aurea scepra et fine regnum –
affigi duro ligno
et clavis laniari atque corona?
Ah Jesu mi, en mihi dulce mori.
Ecce plorando, ecce clamando rogat te misera Maria,
nam tecum mori est illi gloria et vita.
Heu, Fili, non respondes,
heu, surdus ad flectus atque quarellas,

Now let me die, my Son.
How can a mother be consoled
in this fierce pain; in such harsh torment?
Now let me die, my Son.
My Jesus, o Jesus my spouse,
my delight, my hope, my life,
You inflict alas, a wound upon my heart.
Look upon me Jesus, I pray,
look upon Your mother
who, pale and groaning, languishes for You,
and in Your brutal death on the harsh
and monstrous cross, asks to be nailed with You.
My Jesus, O my Jesus, O powerful man, O God,
the suffering of whose breast, alas!
tortures Mary;
take pity on her, let her die with You,
who lived for You.
But You depart quickly from this life, O my Son,
and I weep here;
You break through hell, defeating the proud enemy,
and I, a prey to sorrow, am left alone and sad.
You the gentle Father, You the joyous ones will
nourish at the fount of love, but I will not see You
again,

O Father, O my beloved!
Is this the promise of the Archangel Gabriel?
This the high throne of our forefather David?
This the royal crown that binds your hair,
this the golden sceptre and kingdom –
to be fixed to the hard cross,
pierced with nails and a crown of thorns?
Ah my Jesus, it would be sweet to die.
Behold, how weeping and crying wretched Mary calls
you, for to die with you is glory and life.
Alas, my son, you do not reply,
alas, you are deaf to my tears and complaining,

O morso, o culpa, o inferne,
ecce sponsus meus mersus in undis velox,
O terrae centrum aperite profundum
et cum dilecto meo quoque absconde.
Quid loquor? Heu quid spero, misera?
Heu iam quid quero?
O Jesu mi, non sit quid volo,
sed fiat quod tibi placet.
Vivat mestum cor meo pleno dolore,
pascere Fili mi, Matris amore.

12. Salve, O Regina (from: Seconda raccolta de canti sacri SV 326)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Salve, O Regina, o Mater, o vita, o spes,
Salve, o clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.
Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae
Salve, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve
Ad te clamamus, clamamus exules filii Evae,

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
In hac lacrimarum vale.
Eia ergo, o Regina, o Mater, o vita, o spes, o clemens,
o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria, advocata nostra, illos tuos
miseri cordes oculos
Ad nos converte.
Et Iesum benedictum fructum ventris tui
Nobis post hoc exilium ostende.

oh anguish, o evil, o hell itself,
for my betrothed to be submerged in turbulent waters,
o may the deep abyss of the earth
open to consume me also with my beloved.
What am I saying?, Alas what can I hope for,
wretched as I am? Alas, what do I seek?
Oh my Jesus, not as I desire,
but may it be as it pleases You.
Let my heart live in sadness, full of grief,
To nourish my Son with a mother's love.

Hail, O Queen, o Mother, o life, o hope,
Hail, o clement, o loving, o sweet Virgin Mary.
Hail, Queen, mother of mercy
Hail, our life, sweetness and hope, hail.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve
To you we sigh, mourning and weeping
In this valley of tears
Turn then, O Queen, O Mother, o life, o hope, o
clement, o loving, o sweet Virgin Mary, our advocate,
those merciful eyes
towards us.
And Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb,
After our exile, show us.