

Notes on STABAT MATER

1 Spiritual Meaning

- 1.1 Expresses the spiritual and emotional bond which unites Mary (Our Lady of Sorrows) and all Christians to the death of her Son on the Cross
 - 1.1.1 Mary's presence and participation with her Son Jesus in the Sacrifice of the Cross
 - 1.1.2 Mary's maternal compassion to all generations of Christians: Jesus bore the sins of the world during his passion and death.
 - 1.1.3 Mary invites us to unite our personal suffering with her own.
 - 1.1.4 Mary reminds us that Christians are called to expiate for his or her own sins and the sins of their neighbors, and the sins of the world: our sharing: through fasting, prayer, and contrition for sin.
- 1.2 The compassion of Mary is part of the mystery of the Church community's sharing in, and offering, the Sacrifice of Jesus for the salvation of the world. Each member of the Church has a role to play in redeeming the world. Our Lady of Sorrows is a guide who inspires and teaches us how to be compassionate.

2 Historical Aspects

- 2.1 Possible authors: St. Bonaventure, Jacopone da Todi, and Pope Innocent II
- 2.2 da Todi (Lawyer, then Secular Franciscan, then Friar Minor)
 - 2.2.1 1495 attribution
 - 2.2.2 tone and sensitivity parallel that of da Todi's poems
 - 2.2.3 strictly stylistic comparisons yield uncertain and even disputable results
 - 2.2.4 twelfth century qualities: an intricate rhyme scheme and a regular meter (usually trochaic).

3 Liturgical Importance

- 3.1 Since 1727: a Sequence for Mass of the Seven Sorrows of Mary on September 15 and on Friday before Holy Week, as well as their corresponding offices.
- 3.2 retained as an optional Sequence for September 15 in the reformed Roman Missal and as the hymn for the Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, and Evening Prayer in the new Liturgy of Hours.
- 3.3 The Stabat Mater's popularity is reflected by its use in the popular devotion of the Stations of the Cross.

4 Its Place in Music

- 4.1 16th C the sequence motet was a favorite: elaborate polyphonic settings
 - 4.1.1 Palestrina's two choruses and combines several couplets to suggest larger musical units within the total composition.
- 4.2 17th and 18th C: large works for chorus and orchestra: divided into a number of autonomous and differentiated movements: E.g. Seffani, Scarlatti, Pergolesi, Boccherini, and Haydn.
- 4.3 19th C: Verdi, Rossini, Schubert, and Dvorak.