

LITURGICAL SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

For the Servants of Mary it is the Liturgy which is the most special place for expressing their consecration to God and their service of the Virgin Mary. Liturgy has always been one of the hallmarks of their identity. This was expressed at the very beginnings, in the *Legenda de Origine* no. 21, where it says, *jugiter divino culto insistere* – to participate most closely in divine worship.

The first Constitutions of the Order, *Constitutiones antiquae*, open with two chapters of norms for liturgical services and prayer. Some principles are stated: never omit the reverences in honor of the Mother of God, except during the Easter Triduum; follow the rites of the Roman curia; adopt the psalm-tones and texts of the Gallican formulae; allow the possibility of using any local rite of the prayer offices, if this is needed because of lack of the necessary liturgical books – *paupertas libro-rum*. On the opposite side, however, no expense should be spared when arranging the creation and decoration of the liturgical volumes, despite the fact that the Order was basically quite poor. Lastly, there was a duty to ensure unity of liturgical celebrations in all the priories of the Order: indeed, only the Order's general chapter had authority to sanction variations in liturgical usage.

The figure the Mother of God never had a separate place in the liturgy of the Servants of Mary: she is always incorporated into the most broad appreciation of the paschal mystery, which permeates the entire liturgical year. The liturgical year always follows the basic shape of the Roman Church's calendar, but underlying it is a quite different, well-defined structure: it begins with the birthday of the Virgin and unfolds right through to her Assumption, with special attention to the Marian festivals and a regular emphasis on the Marian celebration of Saturdays.

This section now presents a number of liturgical texts proper to the Servite Order, mostly referring to devotion to Our Lady and to St. Augustine. They are significant texts in the origins of the history and spirituality of the Servants of Mary.

The general usage of sequences by Servites was that used typically by the Cistercians. However, there are two particular sequences in the choral volumes of Siena priory for which there seems to be no known source: *Ave, novella femina* and *Ave, Virgo virginum*. There is also the final section of a Troparium on the *Salve Regina*, which begins *Virgo Mater Ecclesiae*: this too is altogether original. It is this final section which allows us to identify the great importance of the text which was sung during Advent, the season of the divine motherhood of Mary: Annunciation and Easter form a single mystery, lived by Mary in her own individual person. She is an active subject in the mystery of salvation. Therefore she is a unique refuge for the faithful, prayerful and close to her Son in the mystery of his cross.

In this truly Servite hymn, which has remained unknown until now since the early 1270s, *Ave novella femina* in Chorale codex G in Siena priory, Mary is the new woman, the *novella femina*, the one who is born out of the paschal mystery. She is also, therefore, the ultimate in womanhood, with all perfection come to fruition in her. This lovely hymn takes imagery from *Genesis*, *Exodus* and the *Song of Songs* to describe her: she is the Star of Jacob, the cloud in the desert, the column of fire to guide the people to their freedom in the promised land. She is the *window of heaven*, through whom the incarnate Word appeared, once she had drawn from the divine cup where the Spirit gave forth the seed of new life.

She is the bride and the queen greater than Hannah, Rachel, Rebecca, Lia and Susanna: Mary sums up all the holy women of the Old Testament in her own person. She is the mountain of salvation,

the bridge, the fountain, the dry fleece of Gideon preceding the great liberation from Midian. She is the promised land, and the ark which keeps safely the perfect and complete covenant. She is the priestly rod and the provider of true manna from God. She is the sign of a Passover already achieved, and yet also a sign of eschatological hope for future achievement. She is the one who brings forth the true Solomon, endowed with Gospel wisdom, leading the way for the temple not made by human hands where every prayer is contemplation.

That is how the Servants of Mary prayed to their Queen and Mother of Mercy, asking her to intercede on their behalf. Their new music – *novam melodiam* – was their prayer, asking her to guide them to the safe haven of salvation.

The whole hymn shows a sense of Mary reigning already in glory, linking that glory always to her sharing in the passion of her Son during her time on earth: she, in her time, had turned in prayer to the Christ who was scourged and sore wounded. So she becomes a source of mercy and a gateway for forgiveness. She becomes a comfort for people's hearts. She is enthroned in glory because she had shared in the paschal mystery of Christ. She is also the bride, by reason of her supreme calling to be mother. (Extracts taken from L. CROCIANI, *La liturgia dei Servi nei primi due secoli di vita* – Liturgy of Servites in their 1st two centuries).

In the chorale codex Y in Florence and the chorale codex E in Siena, we meet something else besides the *Reverentiae* paid to the Virgin Mary: there are also four anthems in honor of St. Augustine. These are anthems held in common with other foundations who base themselves on the Rule of St. Augustine. One of these anthems is Canon vite canonice. Here Augustine is described as the law that guides our way of life, and the decree for our lives – *via morum* and *vite nostre decretum*. He is the one who teaches us how to read sacred Scripture and penetrate the mysteries of Christ. This reference to St. Augustine is central for the Order of Servants of Mary; in its early centuries the Order was commonly referred to as “the Order of St. Augustine”.

Also published below and worthy of note is a set of rubrics, taken from the opening lines of codex chorale F in Siena. It is of historical interest in the liturgical traditions of the Servite Order. It was probably a decree or *constitutio* of a general chapter held around the year 1271.

Bibliography

P. M. B RANCHESI, *Libri corali del convento di s. Maria dei Servi di Siena (sec. XIII-XVIII)*, in *Studi Storici OSM*, 17 (1967) p. 116-160 – [Choir Volumes from the Siena Priory of S. Maria dei Servi 13-18c].

L. CROCIANI, *La liturgia dei Servi nei primi due secoli di vita dell'Ordine*, in *I Servi nel Trecento: squarci di storia e documenti di spiritualità*, (3^a set-timana di Monte Senario, 8-13 settembre 1980), Monte Senario 1980 (Quaderni di Monte Senario. Sussidi di storia e spiritualità, 3), p. 87-118 [Liturgy of Servites in their 1st two centuries].

L. CROCIANI, *I primi testi liturgici dei Servi di Maria: analisi strutturale e linguistica*, in *L'Ordine dei Servi di Maria nel primo secolo di vita. Atti del convegno storico: Firenze, Palazzo Vecchio – SS. Annunziata 23-24 maggio 1986*, Firenze 1988, p. 253-271 [Early Servite Liturgical texts, structural and linguistic analysis].

A. M. DAL PINO, *Il “De Reverentiis Beatae Mariae Virginis” nelle Costituzioni dei Servi di Maria*, in *Studi Storici OSM*, 5 (1953), p. 202-253

TEXTS

SEQUENCES

Ave virgo virginum

Hail and rejoice, o virgin of virgins;
hail and rejoice, of all lights brightest light;
hail and rejoice, o Mother of grace.

Hail and rejoice, humanity's rescue;
hail and rejoice, o hope full of comfort;
hail and rejoice, way home for our race.

Hail and rejoice, blessed Mary the virgin;
hail and rejoice, thou full of all grace;
hail and rejoice, with homage we praise thee.

Hail and rejoice, o daughter of God;
hail and rejoice, thou Mother most holy;
hail and rejoice, ineffable lady.

Hail and rejoice, sweet pardon's own doorway;
thou fountain of mercy
with sweetness like none.

Hail and rejoice, o splendor of glory,
brighter at midday
than any bright Sun.

Hail, thou light of heavenly beings;
hail, thou peace of the faithful below;
hail to thee, o most blessed so fine.

Hail to thee, our most wonderful joy;
hail: consoling light for our hearts;
hail to thee, full of kindness benign.

Supplication to thee do we pay, dear Lady:
attentively turn thine ears to our prayer,
as we call upon thee in our need for thy love.

So with the help of thy heavenly remedy,
healed and restored in the peace of our God,
may we reign at thy side in the heavens above. Amen

Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi, Choir book G, col. 145v.-147 (1271).

Ave, novella femina

Hail thou, new woman,
 who by a new wonder
 art bearer and mother of God.

Salve, Regina, Hail, holy queen!

Maiden made mother
 by heaven's own seed,
 cup of sweet nourishment
 God thou didst feed.

Mater misericordie, mother of mercy!

Spouse of our God
 and the mistress of heaven,
 queen of all monarchs, bright Lady serene.

Vita et spes nostra, our life and our hope!

Blushed as with roses,
 virgin so fruitful,
 embrace of all lovers,
 sweet charity's vein.

Ora pro servis tuis, pray for us thy servants

Gloss making clear
 the law of our king,
 wise counsel of God
 and help to the world for salvation.

Salve, regina, Hail, holy queen!

Thy branches uphold us,
 thy leaf-fronds protect us,
 o rose, purest lily,
 thou home of his power's visitation.

Mater misericordie, mother of mercy!

Window of heaven,
 through thee was the Son
 of the Father made flesh
 and forth to the world
 was made known.

Vita et spes nostra, our life and our hope!

Mediatrice, advocate,
 right hand of God;
 virgin, yet mother acclaimed
 of all generations made new
 and re-born.

Ora pro servis tuis, pray for us thy servants!

Maiden, great eagle they name thee,
 bearing the blossoming rod in thy beak
 the vanquishing leader ending our war.

Salve, regina, Hail, holy queen!

Lamplight divine and shrine of his beauty,
 begetting the One who begot thee!
 Sap of the cedar, Jacob's own star.
Mater misericordie, mother of mercy

Beating and crushing the rage of the serpent,
 "nulling the slaves" condemnation :
 thou dost enlighten the dark of our blindness,
 so illuminous.
Vita et spes nostra, our life and our hope!

Calf of pure life thou
 abundant fine vessel of heavenly grace
 for all who do thirst at the fountain of God,
 so gracious.
Ora pro servis tuis, pray for us thy servants!

O precinct of God-given fruit,
 thou also medicinal leaves
 to bring us solace and security.
Salve, regina, Hail, holy queen!

O bearer of Him who is truly the ruler of all, restorer of all
 that was held in captivity
 through human vice and depravity.
Mater misericordie, mother of mercy!

Shading umbrella, tabernacle for God,
 great splendor for gaze of the angels,
 fair bride of the king endearing.
Vita et spes nostra, our life and our hope!

Clear oracle of heaven's own word,
 thou miracle-sign for the people:
 cruel ties of the Law repealing
Ora pro servis tuis, pray for us thy servants!

O dawn of the Sun,
 galaxy in the night,
 ever full of God's grace,
 bearing Moses aboard.
Salve, regina, Hail, holy queen!

O beauteous moon,
 heaven's musical delight,
 o bearer of love and
 of lovers' sweet chord.
Mater misericordie, mother of mercy!

Thou sweet incense and leader and light,
 more even than Hanna and Sara,
 than Rachel, Rebecca,
 than Lia and Susanna.

Vita et spes nostra, our life and our hope!

Thou mountain, bridge-span,
 holy fountain, beautiful growth over ruins of sin;
 thou snow, fleece and soil,
 holy urn, staff and manna.

Ora pro servis tuis, pray for us thy servants!

O barque for the Mariner
 bearing most safely
 to Solomon
 gold from Opheer
 so fine.

Servorum audi, virgo, novam melodiam
 Welcome, o virgin, the new melody
 of thy servants.

Open door of the gateway,
 bless'd key that opens
 for all of us visions
 in the temple
 divine:

Dirige ipsos sperantes in te. Amen
 Guide all who place their hope
 in you. Amen

Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi, Choir book G, ff. 128-132 (1271).

RESPONSORIES

1. *Spes desperatis, Hope of the hopeless*

Hope of the hopeless,
 fount of abundant compassion,
 blossomed virginity's flower
 in fruitful motherhood acclaimed.

*Thou rose amid thorns,
 come restore now our ruins.*

Thou solace for th' desolate,
 kind mother of orphans,

*Thou rose amid thorns,
 come restore now our ruins.*

2. *Salve, nobilis: Hail, noble lady*

Hail, noble offshoot of Jesse,
hail, fairest flower of the field,
blessed Mary,

*from thee did arise
the Valley's fair Lily*

Sweet perfume art thou
more than choicest of oils,
honeycomb pours at thy lips,
with honey and milk 'neath thy tongue.

*From thee did arise
the Valley's fair Lily*

To the Father be glory
and so to the Son
and to thee, Holy Spirit,
co-equal and one.

*From thee did arise
the Valley's fair Lily*

3. *Post partum, After his birth*

After his birth a virgin inviolate
thou didst for ever remain.

Mother of God, intercede for us

O Virgin Mother of God,
he whom the whole world
could never contain
was made flesh and made home
in thy womb

Mother of God, intercede for us

4. *Candida virginitas, Pure whitest virginity*

Radiant heav'nly virginity,
all colors displaying:
thou source welling forth
with abundance of life,

*Rightly all people do sing to you
honor and praise*

She rightly was chosen
to bring forth her Lord;
her fruitful virginity
brings us all back to her Son

*Rightly all people do sing to her
honor and praise*

Glory be...

*Rightly all people do sing to her
honor and praise*

Bologna, Santa Maria dei Servi, Choral book E, ff. 100-104 (c.1270 AD)

TROPE OR GLOSS on the “SALVE”

Virgin, Mother of the Church

Hail, holy Queen of mercy.
Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning
and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, our most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy towards.
And after this our exile, show unto us
the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus

Mother of the Church, Virgin holy,
Gateway of eternal glory,
Be our refuge, guide us on
To the Father and the Son.

O clemens – o clement!

Virgin clement, virgin loving,
Virgin sweet, o Mary mother,
hear the blessed prayers of all
who on thy loving kindness call.

O pia – o loving!

Mother of God, o glorious one,
bearing the Father’s only Son:
Pray for us and pray for all
who celebrate thy memorial.

O dulcis – o sweet one!

Give our prayers to Christ your Son,
Jesus scourged, our vict’ry won;
By his wounds and thorns we all
were saved: he drank our bitter gall.

Maria. Alleluya – Virgin Mary, Alleluya!

Bologna, S. Maria dei Servi, Choir book E, f. 106, (1270 ca.)

PRAYERS TO ST. AUGUSTINE

Most holy father, safe way of our truth,

bright light for all doctors to learn
 the deepest treasures of Scripture;
 Guiding law for our way of life,
 o Father so meek, we ask for thy prayers
 that we too, like thee, may enter within
 the sweetest mysteries of Christ.

O Jerusalem our mother, rejoice:
 for thy King hath redeemed Augustine thy son
 from bondage and slavery in Babylon
 Augustine proclaims it in preaching so bold,
 faithful servant of the heavenly City of God.

Thou art the blest rule for our regular life,
 a light to illumine our steps on the way.
 Call upon Christ for your servants, we pray,
 that he dwell in our minds ever present to stay
 and unite us and join us in unending peace
 as the ranks of his heavenly armies increase.

Florence, Santissima Annunziata, Choir book Y, ff 241-243

Canon vite canonice

Canonical ruler and life's guiding law,
 Thou light for our footsteps indeed.
 Beg Christ for his servants in need
 To enlighten our minds as we plead,
 And to tranquillity eternal and sure
 Unite us with ranks of his heavenly choir.

Augustine, clear norm guiding clerical ways,
 Showing them life to illumine their days:
 Unite us and bind us, dear father we pray
 to the ranks of the people who acclaim thee in praise
 The Doctor of doctors, their rule to inspire.

Augustine, rule-giver to help our infirmity,
 Scourge of the Arians, confuting heresy;
 Purest of lovers of spiritual poverty,
 Widening the City of God in security:
 Greatness of God thou ever didst sing.

Augustine, beloved good father and more,
 Thou source of right doctrine, we implore:
 Thou rudder for barque of the faith ever sure,
 By thy merciful help which will ever endure,
 Bring us to heavenly mansions' own door.

Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi, Choir book H, ff 39v-40, 47-48.

RUBRIC

Let this rubric be transcribed on to the opening page of all the Graduals.

The first prescription is that the friars shall write their musication using square notes upon four lines in black or red ink, in both the Graduals and the night-time Antiphonaries as well as in the other books; they shall write the text clearly and decisively in such a way that the melody finds its place above the appropriate part of the text: the lines must be drawn with the right spacing so that they enclose the musical note above and below.

The second prescription is that they shall keep the text and its notation, including all ties and rests as contained in officially corrected copies, using great diligence and not removing or adding anything personal.

The third prescription is that they shall correction with diligence all liturgical books that have been copied several times, three times at least, both those for reading and those for use in the choir, ensuring that both text and notation are carefully checked. In this way these works will not become corrupt through multiplication of mistakes, as usually occurs. This also applies to the ordinary books of the Breviary and the Missal, and any other eventual missals that they may come to hold.

The fourth prescription is this: when they have corrected the ordinary Graduals and the Missals, they shall celebrate the office in the manner contained therein. Nor shall they get seculars to write or annotate the texts for any reason whatever, so long as there are friars of the Order who are able and competent in writing and notation; if however there are no such able friars, they shall be set to learn, obliged to do so by their superiors, since seculars corrupt almost everything they write and notate.

Moreover, when an individual cantor or several cantors open the singing of a gradual chant, let them continue as far as the two unified pauses; in the same way, when the gradual chant or the *Alleluja* is recited chorally by two antiphonarians, let them continue as far as the two unified pauses; whenever two cantors sing the gradual chant, the *Alleluja*, or the final small verse of the Tract, let them continue as far as the last two unified pauses, after which the choir shall complete what follows and only that.

Furthermore, the *Allelujas* notated in the margins of the graduals shall be added to the introits, offertories and communion antiphons only in the time between Easter and Pentecost.

Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi, Choir book F, f 1v (1271).