

Editor's Notes for Himno Religioso a la Inmaculada Virgen María

This beautiful hymn was composed for and was first performed on the occasion of the inauguration of a new Roman Catholic temple in Madrid's Barrio de Salamanca on December 8, 1870 dedicated to the "Most Holy Mother the Virgin Mary in the Sacred Mystery of Her Immaculate Conception." The upscale Barrio de Salamanca of Madrid, today one of the toniest neighborhoods in Spain's capital, had just been developed by the well-connected land developer and financial speculator José de Salamanca y Mayol (1811-1883), first Marquis of Salamanca, and was named after him. One of the first needs identified for the neighborhood was the creation of a parish church. A suitable parcel of land was found, the necessary donations and bank credits were promptly obtained, and in less than a year, a small church and a girls' school were built on the chosen site.

With the rapid growth of the neighborhood, the new church quickly became too small, and only 32 years later a decision was made to move the parish church to a larger site nearby, which is today's *Basilica de la Concepción*, inaugurated by the Spanish royal family in 1914 after a lengthy construction process.

This musical work, created late in Eslava's life, is set to a Marian hymn written by Francisco Pareja y Alarcón (1817-?), a well-regarded journalist and lawyer, and is dedicated to the "Asociación de Señoras de la Purísima Concepción", a neighborhood association of women created for the purpose of raising the funds needed for the construction of the church. On December 7, 1870, the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo granted his authorization allowing the temple to be used in worship, an event that was celebrated the following day with a solemn ceremony of blessing and inauguration.

This hymn is accompanied by a delightful piano/organ duet. There are seven long verses. Chances are that during actual performance, different singers or small groups would (or may) perform each voice, so as to add variety. An approximate translation follows:

<p>Coro: Gloria, gloria a la excelsa María, Luz de cielo, más pura que el sol, de los tristes solaz y alegría, tierna madre del pueblo español.</p> <p>1. Pecó Adán y por siglos cuarenta vivió el mundo entre sombras hundido, cual bajel que en la noche perdido desarbola furioso huracán. Mas lució en Nazaret venturosa de María la estrella brillante, y del mundo el bajel zozobran llegó al puerto feliz de su afán.</p>	<p>Chorus: Glory, glory to the exalted Mary, Light of heaven, purer than the sun, of the sad, solace and joy, tender mother of the Spanish people.</p> <p>1. Adam sinned and for forty centuries the world lived in shadows immersed, like a ship that lost in the night loses its mast to the raging storm. But joyfully shined in Nazareth, of Mary the brilliant star, and away from the world the foundering ship happily reached the port of its desire.</p>
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2. Como el iris ahuyenta las nubes,
que lanzaron el rayo y el trueno,
de María el purísimo seno
iris fue de esperanza y salud.
Madre Virgen del Verbo humanado,
dió amorosa de Adán a los hijos,
tras angustias y afanes prolijos,
Salvador de infinita virtud.

3. Por Jesús, de su vientre nacido,
para el hombre quedaron abiertas,
del Edén venturoso las puertas
que cerrara la culpa fatal.
Y su amparo feliz y potente
al humano linaje asegura,
salvación y celeste ventura
junto al trono de Dios inmortal.

4. A ti, Madre purísima y bella,
de virtudes y gracias ejemplo,
te ofrecemos humildes el templo
que en tu honor levantamos aquí.
Tú eres grande y pequeño el tributo,
pero en cambio de espléndidos dones,
hoy te rinde el amor corazones,
que respiran tan sólo por ti.

5. Oye ¡Oh Virgen! benigna y clemente,
nuestra voz, que afligida te llama,
y consuelos y gracias derrama
sobre el pueblo que vive en tu fé.
Tuyos son los laureles hispanos,
y tu nombre glorioso y bendito,
con insignes hazañas escrito,
en dos mundos honrrado se ve.

6. Bendiciones concede a la España,
desde el trono de celsos querubes,
disipando tu rostro las nubes
de tristeza y discordia fatal.
Y pues somos tus hijos, Señora,
haz que cesen rencores insanos,
y que todos, unidos y hermanos,
ensalcemos tu nombre inmortal.

2. Just as the rainbow drives away the clouds,
which lightning and thunder had cast,
Mary's most pure womb
was a rainbow of hope and health.
Virgin Mother of the Word turned human,
lovingly gave Adam and his children,
after many an anguish and worry,
a Savior of infinite virtue.

3. Through Jesus, born of her womb,
of joyful Eden the gates
for man were thrown open,
earlier shut by the fatal misdeed.
And her happy and powerful protection
she assures to the human lineage,
salvation and heavenly joy
next to the throne of God immortal.

4. To you, pure and beautiful Mother,
of virtues and mercies example,
we offer you humbly the temple
that in your honor here we raise.
You are big and small a tribute,
but instead of splendid gifts,
to you love now hearts surrender
that breathe only for you.

5. Hear, O Virgin, kind and gracious,
our voice, which distressed calls you,
and spill consolation and grace
over the people who live in your faith.
Yours are the Hispanic laurels,
and your glorious and blessed name,
with illustrious feats written,
in two worlds with honor is recalled.

6. Blessings grant Spain,
from the throne of heavenly cherubs,
dispelling your face the clouds
of sadness and fatal discord.
And as your children, Our Lady,
make unhealthy grudges cease,
and that all, united and as brethren,
exalt your immortal name.

7. Concepción pura y limpia te aclama
la Católica Iglesia en la tierra,
pues de Madre y de Virgen encierra
doble, augusto y feliz galardón.
Invocando ese nombre bendito,
hoy abrimos tu templo sagrado;
ábrenos tú, al morir, el ansiado
de la eterna y brillante Sión.

7. Pure and clean Conception acclaims you
the Catholic Church on this Earth,
because as Mother and Virgin holds
a double, august and joyful award.
Invoking that blessed name,
today we open your sacred temple;
open for us, when we die, the longed for
eternal and brilliant Zion.