

EDITOR'S NOTES FOR TANTUM ERGO A TRES VOCES

The text of the "Tantum Ergo" consists of the last two stanzas of "Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium", a hymn written by Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) for the Feast of Corpus Christi. In Catholic liturgy, "Tantum Ergo" expresses the doctrine that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ during the celebration of the Eucharist, and is sung at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In this rite, people worship Christ via the monstrance, a vessel placed on the Altar in church, with prayers, hymns and time for silent meditation. "Tantum Ergo" is usually sung before the Benediction when the priest blesses the congregation with the monstrance.

Eslava wrote several musical settings for the "Tantum Ergo". This particular piece is a fairly short and simple 3-part chorus accompanied by organ – the sort of thing smaller churches could easily perform. A more elaborate orchestrated version that I previously transcribed can be found on this same web page (<https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>).

LATIN LYRICS:

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui:
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et iubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio.
Amen.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Hence so great a Sacrament
Let us venerate with heads bowed
And let the old practice
Give way to the new rite;
Let faith provide a supplement
For the failure of the senses.

To the Begetter and the Begotten,
Be praise and jubilation,
Hail, honour, virtue also,

And blessing too:
To the One proceeding from Both
Let there be equal praise.
Amen.