

Editor's Notes for *Letanía en Mi*

The *Letanía* (Litany) of Loreto is used to honor Mary, the Mother of God, invoking various titles for her, reminding us of the role she plays in the Christian (especially Catholic) faith. Most likely, the words for the Litany were composed in or around Paris between the years 1150 and 1200. The prayer gets its name from the Italian shrine (Loreto), where it was adopted in 1558. Pope Sixtus V approved its use in public worship in 1587. The Litany is used especially during May services, the month traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is also used at Benediction and some congregations use it in the Divine Office. The Litany is approved for public use and carries a partial indulgence.

The Litany incorporates praises addressed to Mary found extensively in the writings of the early Church Fathers of the first six centuries. Over time, a number of titles for our Lady were removed or added to the Litany. Originally the Litany had fifteen additional titles, such as Our Lady of Humility, Mother of Mercy, Temple of the Spirit, Gate of Redemption, and Queen of Disciples. Recent history has seen the addition of five titles. The last four titles of the Litany which refer to the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, the Rosary and Mary as the Queen of Peace are of recent origin, and are not found in Eslava's Litany, written in the mid-1800's. The Litany concludes with the *Agnus Dei* prayer.

While other composers have set this litany to music, including Mozart, this setting by Hilarión Eslava stands out with its elegant presentation, and beautiful, varied harmonies. At about 9 or 10 minutes, it is also considerably less lengthy than Mozart's half-hour version, making it much more flexible for concert presentation in a variety of venues.

<p>Kyrie, eleison Christe, eleison. Christe, audi nos. Christe, exaudi nos. Pater de caelis, Deus, miserere nobis. Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, miserere nobis.</p> <p>Spiritus Sancte Deus, miserere nobis. Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis.</p> <p>Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. <i>(repeats after each of the following phrases)</i> Sancta Dei Genetrix, Sancta Virgo virginum, Mater Christi, Mater Ecclesiae, Mater Divinae gratiae, Mater purissima, Mater castissima, Mater inviolata, Mater intemerata, Mater immaculata, Mater amabilis, Mater admirabilis, Mater Creatoris,</p>	<p>Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us. God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us. God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us. God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us. Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.</p> <p>Holy Mary, pray for us. <i>(repeats after each of the following phrases)</i> Holy Mother of God, Holy Virgin of virgins, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church, Mother of divine grace, Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Mother inviolate, Mother undefiled, Mother most amiable, Mother most lovable, Mother most admirable, Mother of our Creator,</p>
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<p> Mater Salvatoris, Virgo prudentissima, Virgo veneranda, Virgo praedicanda, Virgo potens, Virgo clemens, Virgo fidelis, Speculum iustitiae, Sedes sapientiae, Causa nostrae laetitiae, Vas spirituale, Vas honorabile, Vas insigne devotionis, Rosa mystica, Turris Davidica, Turris eburnea, Domus aurea, Foederis arca, Ianua caeli, Stella matutina, Salus infirmorum, Refugium peccatorum, Consolatrix afflictorum, Auxilium Christianorum, Regina Angelorum, Regina Patriarcharum, Regina Prophetarum, Regina Apostolorum, Regina Martyrum, Regina Confessorum, Regina Virginum, Regina Sanctorum omnium, Regina sine labe concepta, Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Parce nobis, Domine Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Exaudi nos, Domine Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. </p>	<p> Mother of our Savior, Virgin most prudent, Virgin most venerable, Virgin most renowned, Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful, Virgin most faithful, Mirror of justice, Seat of wisdom, Cause of our joy, Spiritual vessel, Vessel of honor, Singular vessel of devotion, Mystical rose, Tower of David, Tower of ivory, House of gold, Ark of the covenant, Gate of heaven, Morning star, Health of the sick, Refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted, Help of Christians, Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins, Queen of all Saints, Queen conceived without sin, Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord. Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord. Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. </p>
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UPDATE

28 December, 2021

I originally transcribed this piece in 2020 from a posthumous (1879) edition by the composer's nephew, Bonifacio Eslava, obtained from the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid. However, in 2021, a second version was located at the Archivo de Música de la Capilla Real de Palacio, Archivo General de Palacio (the royal palace archives in Madrid). This manuscript version appears to be in Eslava's handwriting, and is dated 1846, shortly after his appointment as master of the Royal Chapel for Queen Isabel II of Spain.

The 1846 score was titled *Salve y Letanía a 8 voces con Orquesta* (sic), and the cover page included an annotation which translates "It is pointed out that in the Royal Chapel the *Letanía* is sung before the *Salve* and not in the order in which they are here". Indeed, the 1846 manuscript included two scores – the *Salve* and the *Letanía*, in that sequence.

When I compared the two sets of scores, I found discrepancies between the 1846 and posthumous versions of the *Salve* that were significant enough to justify reediting and publishing the two versions separately. However, the two versions of the *Letanía* that were paired with the *Salves* were almost identical to each other, and those discrepancies that I did find appeared to be minor printing or transcription errors. So while I did take the opportunity when revisiting this piece to correct those errors, as well as to make some format improvements, I did not think the differences were sufficient to require a separately edited version of the *Letanía*, as I have done with the *Salve*. Regardless, it is clear that the two pieces were intended to be performed as a set. By way of reference, the reedited 1846 *Salve* (CPE-432) can be found at https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/salve-a-8-voces-en-mi-eslava, and the posthumous version (CPE-627), at https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/salve-en-mi. On the hilarioneslava.org site, all of these scores can be found on the Music page, at <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>, under the *Santísima Virgen/Blessed Virgin* sub-heading.