

Editor's Notes for *Letanía a 3 Voces (en Fa Menor)*

The 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 Litany was composed in or around Paris between the years 1150 and 1200. It 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 titles of the Litany which refer to the Mother of the Church, Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, the Rosary and Mary as the Queen of Peace are of relatively recent origin, and are not found in Eslava's Litany, written in the mid-1800's. It concludes with the *Agnus Dei* prayer.

We believe that Eslava may have written as many as eight different settings for the Litany of Loreto, and I have transcribed many of these; see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/sets/12714418> and/or <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>

We found two sources for this particular litany, one that had been previously published by Eslava's nephew (Bonifacio Eslava), and another handwritten manuscript at the Archives of the Cathedral of Cádiz. Although clearly written for 3 voices (STB) which seem to carry equal weight in the overall composition, and indication that either a baritone or bass may sing the bass line, the published score mentions that it is [a *Letanía*] "obligada de bajo" (bass *obligado*) within the title. The voicings themselves could be either solo voices or choir sections.

The handwritten manuscript did not contain the "*obligada de bajo*" mention; however, the intent of the three voicings (provided in both full score and particella locations) were somewhat confusing and conflicting. In the full-score case, the voicings were presented as Tenor/Soprano/Bass (in that order), whereas the particellas indicated Tenor 1/Tenor 2/Bass. The Tenor 1 particella matched the Tenor score, and the Tenor 2 particella matched the soprano score. My takeaway is that this piece could be sung either as STB or TTB, but I have transcribed it for STB per Bonifacio Eslava's published score, as he would have likely had Hilarión Eslava's personal approval.

Finally, the handwritten score also included parts for two violins and a contrabass. These parts appear to have been written at a different time and in a different handwriting than the remaining manuscript, as if someone had started an orchestration process but never completed it¹. We do not know whether this was Eslava or somebody else. At any rate, they closely followed the keyboard accompaniment (present in both versions), with quite a few errors. I decided to include these string sections (corrected) as alternative accompaniment or optional parts in my transcription.

¹ The manuscript pages from Cádiz bear the rubber stamp "Enrique Matute (y) Mira, Bajo de Capilla de esta S.I.C. Cádiz". Mr. Matute was a 20th century local musician and composer –and as the stamp indicates, sang as a bass at the Cathedral. It is unclear, however, whether he is the author of the manuscript copy or merely its past owner.

For more about Eslava and his music, visit <https://hilarioneslava.org/eslava-bio/en/>

Lyrics and English translation follow:

Kyrie, eleison Christe, eleison. Christe, audi nos. Christe, exaudi nos. Pater de caelis, Deus, miserere nobis. Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, miserere nobis. Spiritus Sancte Deus, miserere nobis. Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis. Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. (<i>repeats after each of the following phrases</i>) Sancta Dei Genetrix, Sancta Virgo virginum, Mater Christi, Mater Divinæ gratiæ, Mater purissima, Mater castissima, Mater inviolata, Mater intemerata, Mater immaculata, Mater amabilis, Mater admirabilis, Mater Creatoris, Mater Salvatoris, Virgo prudentissima, Virgo veneranda, Virgo prædicanda, Virgo potens, Virgo clemens, Virgo fidelis, Speculum iustitiæ, Sedes sapientiæ, Causa nostræ laetitiae, Vas spirituale, Vas honorabile, Vas insigne devotionis, Rosa mystica, Turris Davidica, Turris eburnea, Domus aurea, Foederis arca, Ianua cæli,	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. 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 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, 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,
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<p> 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> 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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