


7.12.67
8.12.69
9.12.71 (147)

Ps 116 tape

Lk 1³⁶⁻⁸ (Pray. f. v. c p 22) Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be...'

PRAYERS

No season of the Christian year has inspired so much music and song as Christmastime. Advent hymns and music are a bit more difficult to find; and it's rather early yet to play Christmas carols. So here is something unusual — quiet, simple, very prayerful and well suited to this first week of Advent. It's a song of praise to Our Lady, part of ^{one} cycle of mediaeval Italian religious folk-songs, ^{it is one} telling the story of the birth of Christ. The words are mainly Italian; in rather pedestrian English, they are: .

(from Record sleeve)

Landario 91 di
Cortone
[Monarch H71086]

If, by any chance, you've been wondering why I said I thought that [pieces of music] song in praise of Mary a suitable one for Advent, — well, it's because Mary is herself a most important part of Advent. We mustn't omit her from our thoughts & prayers as we prepare for Christmas, because she is part of God's plan for the coming of His Son into our world, and because she figures so much, historically, in the preparation for the birth of Christ, and in the Church's prayer during Advent while we're getting ready to celebrate that event in the mystery of our redemption.

In fact, it must be with Mary that we pray and prepare during Advent, just as it will be with her that we shall rejoice at Christmastime. → With Mary, because she was the chosen one from whom Christ was to be born in human flesh. Of all human beings, she was obviously closest to Christ, in every sense. She carried Him within herself for those nine joyful months after God's messenger told her of His plan and she humbly accepted the momentous task she'd been chosen for and prepared for by God's grace from the very beginning of her own existence. She was the last act in that long line of events, stretching through the centuries of Old Testament times, by which God prepared our world to receive the promised

Redeemer, His fullest Word of revelation, His own only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ - Emmanuel, God-with-us. ||| So, in the last weeks before Christmas, it is Mary with whom we wait and watch for the birth of her Son. As she was not a ^{mere} passive tool in bringing Christ into the world, neither must we just sit back and wait for God to do something about our world. She gave Him her full obedience in free faith, willingly cooperating in the work of human salvation, devoting herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son.

With Mary - because in both Scripture and the tradition of the Church, she is so intimately connected with the coming of Christ, with His ~~own~~ redeeming life, death and ^{rising} resurrection and with the life and saving work of His Body still among us today, His Church. It is with her, too, that we now look forward in eagerness for His coming again and the completion of His renewal of all creation in the love of His Father.

With Mary - because Christ himself left her to us, to be our Mother, our model of willing faith and full acceptance of His will for us, our hope, our most powerful advocate among all those who are closest to the heart of Christ.

Finally, it is with Mary we pray & prepare for Christmas just because it is with the Church we pray & prepare. She is above all, Mother of the Church. From earliest times, and now

recently re-emphasized, she has been thought of as a figure, a model, the type of the Church. So the Advent in the Church today is exactly paralleled with Mary waiting for Christmas; and now that we await another coming, Mary is again with us, a model of how we must give ourselves to God, work with him, accept everything from his hands, and pray in closest love and union with the Son who is coming to us.