

Nightday Prayers - 188

- 4. 5. 70
- 3. 5. 71
- 7. 5. 73
- 6. 5. 74

Alleluia Super [RHS-136]
 Hacc Dies (LHK)
 Stravinsky, Alleluia
 Yvonne Alleluia [FADE under]
 [LHK-HMV?]

REGINA COELI

During this Easter season, this year, I don't ^{haven't} yet said anything about one person who was a witness of Christ's rising from death, a person closely associated with Him - His mother, our lady - think I've said very much about Our Lady as Mary is Mary's name in traditional devotion, today let's join our prayers with hers. If you remember, the only mention of her ^{by name} in scripture, after the resurrection of her Son, is in the description of the nucleus of the Church, waiting in prayer as Christ had instructed them, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They met, in prayer, together with Mary the mother of Jesus. What her position was, among the apostles, how they regarded her (especially John) is left to one's imagination, helped of course by what we know of the respect and honour given her by the first Christian communities as Mother of Christ and Mother of God. Then, too, her Son had given her, in the hour of His passion and glorification, a special charge to be for all His brethren and followers what she was for Him - mother. As a human person in whom Christ trusted and whom He loved with a love that was more than natural piety, she has a special place in the hearts and trust of all of us who dare to call Christ our brother and near it - she is the mother of the Church, which is called 'mother'; she is its 'type'. Like all of us, Mary was redeemed by Christ, her Son and our Lord; but she was also the closest person to Jesus in His human life, dear to God because of her complete faith, trust and generosity in His service. This is why we honour her with special reverence and devotion. The last recorded words of her, in the gospel, are an instruction, though, to do whatever Jesus says is to be done. So, a true devotion to our lady will also be a sincere effort to live a Christian life to

the full. And there can't be full Christian life without prayer. In recent years there's been an awful lot of stress on the social responsibility of being a Christian, the need to be involved with others and in the life of the world to which the Church is sent - a stress that has indeed been needed. But a quest for relevance in the world which is not inspired by and based on faith can hardly be really Christian - and faith needs prayer, communion with God whom we cannot see, hear and touch in the ordinary way of ^{sense} ~~sight~~ and human experience. It is sometimes remarkable how lacking is this vision in modern studies of problems in the Church and Christian life - as if Christianity could be reduced to sociology or any other -ology which deals with human life and living, wholly or in part, but without the context of God's plan and action which only faith reveals. If there was a fault in Christians being too unworldly before, there's equal if not greater fault in being too worldly now. In the company of Mary, it is easier to keep a sane and Christian balance - in prayer with her, and thus with the whole of Christ's body the Church and without the aberration of trying to be a Christian entirely on one's own in a kind of personal, private devotion excluding others: - in contemplation of her who is Mother of Christ, mother of God and our mother, for what is more typical of life in this world than child-birth and motherhood, the family beginnings of every human being, and every institution and society. For our prayer in music this midday, I want to go back to the Mass of Easter Sunday, to the beautiful Sequence hymn which tells so simply and poetically the story and the necessity of that day when Mary's faith was vindicated: the placidant "Victimae Paschali"

Byrd (RHK HMV. 259)
 RS 82c
 (Sigs. clark)

MUSIC - PRAYERS

It has long been said that the troublesomeness of the 1st post-war generation of children (in the west, anyway) was due to the failure of their parents. Today even more there seems to be a public conspiracy to make the idea of motherhood even more unattractive, anti-social even. I don't doubt that it's only a small minority of ^{people} ~~women~~ who are vocally against motherhood, for everything from equal pay to easy abortion and laboratory-manufactured children. And we wonder why there must be unhappiness, tragedy, conflict, revolt and so much destruction of people and personality in the world. Of course there are legitimate desires, just as there are hard-cases — maturity and responsibility, being fully human, involved risks and difficulties. But how to judge what is good, true, human and just? One tries to get at all the facts, using the best of human science, knowledge and wisdom — but how often is God considered in the picture, the meaning of His love for mankind shown in the life and death and rising of Christ? One person who did take God seriously, in her life as a woman and mother, was Mary whose faith gave her the privilege of being mother of God-made-man. Like her, and with her help, we shd. be listening for the voice of God, wanting to know His ideas, and eager to live by them. If we want to be truly followers of her Son, and be the heaven in this world and society that He expects His followers to be, we cannot do so without being also with her. That is why we pray for her kind help, and rejoice with her ⁱⁿ Easter-time.