

Ave Maria
(Handl.)
"Ave Maria" 2^d

'Ave Maria', by Jacob Handl: to mark today, 8th Dec., one of the major feast-days of Our Lady, the festival of her Immaculate Conception. Let us in our prayers and music honour her who was God's special choice in preparing the coming of Christ among us, Mary the Mother of Christ: let us ask for her intercession in our own preparations this Advent and Christmastime to welcome Christ coming into our lives. Her feast-day today is a timely reminder of her role in the events we celebrate two weeks from now. And in fact, in the church's prayer and worship at this season, she's one of the principal characters that appear (together with John the Baptist) to point the way for us to welcome Christ at His coming. May we, then, make our Christmas preparations together with her, knowing that in the stable-crib of Bethlehem it is with her that we shall find Christ our new-born Saviour. The 'Hail Mary' may be an old familiar prayer: but it is, after all, (the first part of it) simply the words of St Luke's gospel which introduce the story of the birth of Christ — "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus". And that is, in a way, the best carol we can sing, the best prayer of praise we can make today: so listen again now to that 'Ave Maria' that I began with MUSIC ('Ave Maria': Handl.)

And now

a hymn of Danke in honour of Mary — the translation is by Ronald Knox

QQ. Brev. I p 561* n. 43.

Another song now, a more obvious carol, maybe: a traditional English one.

On Xmas Night

"Blessed be that maid Mary" MUSIC — PRAYERS (Anc. Lit. No 109) 8 Dec

And to end with another hymn, this is part of a double-text setting by Josquin Desprez of the Advent antiphon 'Alma Redemptoris Mater', attributed to the medieval poet 'Hermin the Cripple' QQ. (record sleeve)

[music under..]