

Gregorian Chant

THE ASSUMPTION

Monastic Choir of the Abbey of Fontgombault

INTRODUCTION

With the kind permission of “Art et Musique,” this 1973 Gregorian chant recording of the monastic choir of the Abbey of Notre-Dame de Fontgombault is now available for the American public. The Abbey of Fontgombault, located near Bourges, France, is a Catholic Benedictine monastery of the Solesmes Congregation that has preserved the ancient Latin monastic liturgy with Gregorian chant.

This CD includes the chants of the Mass and the Office of Vespers for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15. The recording was made in the abbey church, a jewel of Romanesque architecture that dates from the 12th century.

The Abbey itself has a long history. In the 10th or the 11th century a hermit named Gombault came to dwell there in the heart of the French countryside. He lived in a cave on the bank of the river Creuse, close to a fountain thereafter called the Fount of Gombault. By the end of the 11th century a large community had been established there under the Benedictine Rule.

Benedictine life continued at the abbey through the succeeding centuries until religious life was suppressed there, as it was throughout all of France, during the French Revolution. In 1948 the monastic buildings were given back to Benedictine monks who came from the Abbey of Solesmes.

After the re-establishment of religious life at Fontgombault, the community flourished and has founded three new monasteries in France, in 1971, 1984 and 1994. In 1999 it established, in the Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma, a new community

dedicated to the same traditional liturgy, Our Lady of the Annunciation of Clear Creek Monastery (www.clearcreekmonks.org).

There is a real relationship between Romanesque architecture and Gregorian melody. They are happily united at Notre-Dame de Fontgombault. Their mere artistic value is first-class. However, much more than an art, they are a spirituality, a way to lead souls to God. Romanesque art and Gregorian Chant exclude everything opposed to the recollection necessary for prayer. Both of them have a certain nobility, a profound peace, a perfect balance, and a wonderful capacity to express the attitude which a creature should have in the presence of his God: an attitude of reverence and adoration, an attitude of humility, confidence, and love. For monks of today as for those of the past, Romanesque lines and Gregorian melodies harmonize to constitute an atmosphere which facilitates the search for God and His worship.

Monks are not the only persons who benefit from this universe of beauty. Many faithful engaged in various conditions flock to the church of Fontgombault. Their reactions show how happy they are to participate in the monastic liturgy through intense but silent spiritual activity. Pope Paul VI, an ardent advocate of this liturgy, in his letter “Sacrificium Laudis”, exhorted religious superiors to “keep the traditional dignity, the beauty, the gravity of the choir office, both in its language and in its chant.” He spoke highly of Gregorian chant which “transcends the boundaries of all nations and is marked by an admirable spiritual force.” He praised the melody which “wells up from the depths of one’s heart where faith is deeply rooted and where charity burns bright.”

Mass

The conventual High Mass, true center of the monastic day, is preceded by the short Office of Terce. On Sundays and feast days there is also a procession through the cloister. Even during the austere penitential seasons, the conventual Mass is clad with an incomparable beauty.

The chants of the Pontifical Mass of the Assumption presented here are magnificent. One should not forget, however, that these chants are not concert melodies. They have a specific role in the liturgy of the Mass, and the order in which they appear here is in conformity with the liturgical action. That is why, outside of their liturgical setting, they are unable to offer exactly the same spiritual intensity as in the church. A recording, unfortunately, cannot reproduce every word and gesture: it can merely evoke the memory of the solemn liturgy. The faithful know, for instance, that the interval which separates the Sanctus from the Agnus Dei is sublime and that a great mystery takes place during the Eucharistic Prayer.

The INTROIT, or Entrance Song, comes from the book of Revelation and chants with a circumspect and lively melody the celestial beauty of Our Lady: “There was a woman whose dress was the sun and who had the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.” In the ALLELUIA the refrain of the day, “Assumpta est Maria in cœlum”, becomes an enthusiastic jubilation, an echo of the joy of the Angels! The COMMUNION SONG proclaims with serenity: “Behold, all generations will call me blessed, for He who is mighty has done great things for me.”

The ordinary is from the Mass IX, reserved for the feasts of Our Lady. No one can get tired of singing or listening to the fervent and peaceful KYRIE or the

enthusiastic GLORIA with its melody overflowing with vitality, or hearing the SANCTUS and the AGNUS. As for the long recitative CREDO V, it remains full of beloved doctrine. The Mass IX is wonderfully suited for creating the atmosphere of praise and supplication in which the Eucharistic sacrifice should be celebrated.

Vespers

Saint Benedict asked his sons to prefer nothing to the Divine Office. The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours gives the monastic day its rhythm. Matins and Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline are the glorious suite, the preparation for, and the continuation of the daily Mass. Vespers are the solemn evening Office.

We have included in our recording practically the entire Office of Vespers, from the beginning of the psalmody until the repetition of the antiphon for the MAGNIFICAT. It starts with four psalms whose antiphons are alternated between the cantors and the choir. This harmonious and beautiful PSALMODY soothes the soul, gently withdrawing it from worries and preoccupations here below; the mind is turned to the heavenly mystery:

Assumpta est Maria in caelum, gaudent Angeli..

Maria Virgo assumpta est ad aethereum thalamum...

In odorem unguentorum tuorum currimus...

Pulchra es et decora...

After the simple and brief chant of the SCRIPTURE READING and the more ornate SHORT RESPONSORY, the monks sing the hymn AVE MARIS STELLA.

This hymn, which is noble and lyrical both in its text and its melody, is justly loved by the devotees of Our Lady.

The solemn chant of the MAGNIFICAT, during which the celebrant incenses the altar, is accompanied by a short antiphon which proclaims once again the joy of the Assumption: “Hodie Maria Virgo cœlos ascendit, gaudete quia cum Christo regnat in æternum”. (Today the Virgin Mary is assumed into Heaven; rejoice and be glad for she will reign forever with Christ.)

Gregorian Chant for the Feast of the ASSUMPTION

Chant for the Mass

1 - Organ: Plein jeu and Fugue, from the “Livre d’orgue” of Pierre du Mage (1684–1740).

2 - Introit:

Signum Magnum apparuit in cœlo; mulier amicta sole, et luna sub pœdibus ejus, et in cœpite ejus corœna stellârum duodecim.

(Psalm 97:1) Cantate Dœmino canticum novum: quia mirabilia fecit.

Glœria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto; Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in Sœcula Sœculœrum. Amen.

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

(Ps 97:1) Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: because He hath done wonderful things.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

3 - Kyrie IX

Kyrie eléison, Kyrie eléison, Kyrie eléison.

Christe eléison, Christe eléison, Christe eléison.

Kyrie eléison, Kyrie eléison, Kyrie eléison.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

4 - Gloria IX

Glória in excélsis Deo. Et in terra pax homínibus bonæ voluntátis. Laudámus te. Benedícimus te. Adorámus te. Glorificámus te. Grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam. Dómine Deus, Rex cæléstis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Dómine Fili unigénite, Jesu Christe. Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccáta mundi, miserére nobis. Qui tollis peccáta mundi, súscipe deprecatióem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserére nobis. Quóniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus Dóminus. Tu solus altíssimus, Jesu Christe. Cum Sancto Spíritu, in glória Dei Patris. Amen.

Glorify to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, We bless Thee. We adore Thee. We glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. Thou Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy. Thou only

art the Lord. Thou only, Jesus Christ, art most high. With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the Father. Amen.

5 - Alleluia:

Allelúia, allelúia. Assúmpta est Mária in cælum: gaudet exércitus Angelórum. Allelúia.

Alleluia, Alleluia. Mary is taken up into heaven: the host of angels rejoice. Alleluia.

6 - Credo V

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipoténtem, factórem cæli et terræ, visibílium ómnium et invisibílium.

Et in unum Dóminum Jesum Christum Filium Dei unigénitum, et ex Patre natum ante ómnia sæcula ; Deum de Deo, lumen de lúmine, Deum verum de Deo vero; génitum, non factum, consubstantiálem Patri; per quem ómnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos hómines et propter nostram salutem descendit de cælis.

ET INCARNATUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO, EX MARIA VIRGINE, ET HOMO FACTUS EST.

Crucifíxus étiam pro nobis sub Póntio Piláto passus et sepúltus est. Et resurrexit tértia die, secúndum Scriptúras. Et ascendit in cælum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum ventúrus est cum glória judicáre vivos et mórtuos, cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spíritum sanctum, Dóminum et vivificántem : qui ex Patre Filióque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adorátur et conglorificátur ; qui locútus est per Prophétas.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.

AND WAS INCARNATE BY THE HOLY GHOST OF THE VIRGIN MARY;
AND WAS MADE MAN.

He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, He sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets.

And in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the world to come. Amen.

7 - Sanctus IX

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth. Pleni sunt cæli et terra glória tua. Hosánna in excélsis. Benedictus qui venit in nómine Dómini. Hosánna in excélsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

8 - Agnus IX

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi: miserére nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi: miserére nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi: dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

9 - Communion:

Beátam me dicent omnes generatiónes, quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est.

All generations shall call me blessed, because He Who is mighty has done great things for me.

Chant for Vespers

10 - Verse:

Deus in adiutorium meum intende. O God, come to my assistance.

Dómine ad adiuvándum me festína. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glória Patri...

Glory be to the Father...

11- Antiphon:

Assúmpta est María in cælum: gaudent Angeli, laudántes benedicunt Dóminum.

Mary has been taken up into heaven: the Angels are rejoicing; praising, they bless the Lord.

Psalm 109

*Dixit Dóminus Dómino meo: * Sede a dextris meis :*

*Donec ponam inimicos tuos, * scabéllum pedum tuórum.*

*Virgam virtútis tuæ emíttet Dóminus ex Sion: * domináre in médio inimicórum tuórum.*

*Tecum princípium in die virtútis tuæ in splendóribus sanctórum: * ex útero ante lucíferum genui te.*

*Jurávit Dóminus, et non pœnitébit eum: * Tu es sacérdos in ætérnum secúndum órđinem Melchisedech.*

*Dóminus a dextris tuis, * confrégit in die iræ suæ reges.*

*Judicábit in natióibus, implébit ruínas: * conquassábit cápita in terra multórum.*

*De torrénite in via bibet: * proptérea exaltábit caput.*

Glória Patri...

The Lord said to my Lord: * “Sit Thou at My right hand,
Until I make Thy enemies * Thy footstool.”

The scepter of Thy power the Lord sendeth forth from Sion: * “Rule Thou in the
midst of Thy enemies!

Thine is princely rule in the day of Thy power in holy splendor: * From the womb before the daystar have I begotten Thee.”

The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: * “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.”

The Lord at Thy right hand smiteth kings * in the day of His wrath;
He judgeth among the nations, maketh ruin complete; * He crusheth heads throughout the land.

On His march He drinketh at the brook * therefore He lifteth high His head.
Glory be to the Father...

12- Antiphon:

María Virgo assúmpta est ad æthéreum thálamum, in quo Rex Regum stelláto sedet sólio.

The Virgin Mary has been taken into the heavenly bridal chamber, where the King of kings is sitting on a starry throne.

Psalm 112

*Laudáte, púeri, Dóminum: * laudáte nomen Dómini.*

*Sit nomen Dómini benedíctum, * ex hoc nunc, et usque in sæculum.*

*A solis ortu usque ad occásum, * laudábile nomen Dómini.*

*Excélsus super omnes Gentes Dóminus, * et super cælos glória ejus.*

*Quis sicut Dóminus Deus noster, qui in altis hábitat, * et humilia réspicit in cælo et in terra?*

*Súscitans a terra ínopem, * et de stércore érigens páuperem:*

*Ut cóllocet eum cum princípibus, * cum princípibus pópuli sui.*

*Qui habitáre facit stérilem in domo * matrem filiórum lætántem.*

Glória Patri...

Praise the Lord, O ye servants! * Praise ye the Name of the Lord.
Blessed be the Name of the Lord * from henceforth now and forever!
From the rising of the sun to its going down * let the Name of the Lord be praised.
The Lord is high above all nations, * and His glory above the heavens.
Who is like the Lord our God who dwelleth on high, * and looketh down upon the
heavens and the earth?
He raiseth the needy from the dust, * and lifteth the poor from the dunghill.
That He may seat him with princes, * with the princes of His people.
He giveth the barren to dwell in the home, * the joyful mother of children.
Glory be to the Father...

13- Antiphon:

In odórem unguentórum tuórum cúrrimus: adolescéntulæ dilixerunt te nimis.
We run after thee to the odor of thy ointments; young maidens have loved thee
exceedingly.

Psalm 121

*Lætátus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi: * In domum Dómini íbimus.*
*Stantes erant pedes nostri, * in átriis tuis Jerúsalem.*
*Jerúsalem, quæ ædificátur ut civitas: * cujus participátio ejus in idípsum.*
*Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Dómini: * testimónium Israel ad confíten-*
dum nómini Dómini.
*Quia illic sederunt sedes in iudício, * sedes super domum David.*
*Rogáte quæ ad pacem sunt Jerúsalem: * et abundantia diligéntibus te.*
*Fiat pax in virtúte tua: * et abundantia in túrribus tuis.*
*Propter fratres meos et próximos meos, * loquébar pacem de te:*
*Propter domum Dómini Dei nostri, * quæsívi bona tibi.*

Glória Patri..

I rejoiced when they said to me: * “Let us go into the house of the Lord”!

Already our feet are standing * at thy gates, O Jerusalem.

O Jerusalem, thou art built as a city * that is joined compactly together;

Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord; * it is a law for Israel, there to praise the name of the Lord.

For there stand the seats of judgment, * the seats of the house of David.

Pray now for peace upon Jerusalem: * “May they that love thee prosper!

Peace be within thy ramparts, * and repose within thy towers!

In behalf of my brothers and my friends * I bespeak thee peace.

In behalf of the house of the Lord our God, * I seek thee good.”

Glory be to the Father...

14- Antiphon:

Pulchra es et decóra, filia Jerúsalem: terribilis ut castrórum ordináta.

Thou art beautiful and comely, O daughter of Jerusalem, terrible as an army set in array.

Psalm 126

*Nisi Dóminus ædificáverit domum, * in vanum laboravérunt qui ædificant eam.*

*Nisi Dóminus custodierit civitátem, * frustra vigilat qui custódit eam.*

*Vanum est vobis ante lucem súrgere: * súrgite postquam sedéritis, qui manducátis panem dolóris.*

*Cum déderit diléctis suis somnum: * ecce hæréditas Dómini, filii: merces, fructus ventris.*

*Sicut sagittæ in manu poténtis: * ita filii excussórum.*

*Beátus vir qui implévit desidérium suum ex ipsis: * non confundétur cum loquétur inimícis suis in porta.*

Glória Patri...

Unless the Lord build the house, * they labor in vain that build it;

Unless the Lord guard the City, * he watcheth in vain that guardeth it.

It is vain that you rise early, and late retire to rest, * ye who eat the bread of toil,
For to His loved ones He giveth it in sleep. * Behold, children are a gift from the
Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.

As arrows in the hand of a warrior, * so are the sons of vigorous youth.

Blessed is the man that hath his quiver filled with them: * he shall not be ashamed,
when he speaketh with his enemies in the gate.

Glory be to the Father...

15 - Capitulum: Judith 13, 22–23

Benedíxit te Dóminus in virtúte sua, quia per te ad níhilum redégit inimícos nostros. Benedícta es tu fília, a Dómino Deo excélso, præ ómnibus muliéribus super terram.

The Lord hath blessed thee with His power because by thee He hath brought our enemies to nought. Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the Most High God, above all women upon earth.

16 - Short Response:

Assúpta est María in cælum, Gaudent Angeli.

Laudántes benedicunt Dóminum.

Glória Patri et Fílio et Spirítui Sancto.

Mary has been taken up into heaven, the Angels are rejoicing.
Praising, they bless the Lord.
Glory be to the Father...

17 - Hymn

Ave maris stella
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper Virgo,
Felix cæli porta.

Sumens illud Ave
Gabriélis ore,
Funda nos in pace,
Mutans Hevæ nomen.

Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen cæcis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

Monstra te esse matrem,
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus
Tulit esse tuus.

Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos, culpæ solutos,

Hail, thou star of ocean!
Portal of the sky!
Ever Virgin Mother
Of the Lord Most High.

Oh, by Gabriel's Ave,
Uttered long ago,
Eva's name reversing,
'Stablish peace below.

Break the captive's fetters;
Light on blindness pour;
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a mother;
Offer Him our sighs,
Who for us incarnate
Did not thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins!
To thy shelter take us;
Gentlest of the gentle!

Mites fac et castos.

Vitam præsta puram

Iter para tutum,

Ut vidéntes Jesum,

Semper collætémur.

Sit laus Deo Patri,

Summo Christo decus,

Spirítui Sancto,

Tribus honor unus. Amen.

Chaste and gentle make us.

Still as on we journey,

Help our weak endeavor;

Till with thee and Jesus

We rejoice forever.

Through the highest heaven,

To the Almighty Three,

Father, Son and, Spirit,

One same glory be. Amen

18 - Verse:

Exaltáta est Sancta Dei Génitrix.

Super choros angelórum.

The holy Mother of God has been exalted.

Above the choirs of Angels to the heavenly kingdom.

19- Antiphon for the Magnificat:

Hódie María Virgo cælos ascéndit: gaudéte, quia cum Christo regnat in ætérnum.

This day the Virgin Mary ascended into the heavens; rejoice, for she is reigning with Christ forever.

*MAGNIFICAT * ánima mea Dóminum,*

*Et exsultávit spíritus meus * in Deo salutári meo.*

*Quia respéxit humilitátem ancillæ suæ, * ecce enim ex hoc beátam me dicent omnes generatiónes.*

*Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, * et sanctum nomen ejus,
Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies * timéntibus eum.
Fecit poténtiam in bráchio suo, * dispérsit supérbos mente cordis sui,
Depósuit poténtes de sede, * et exaltávit húmiles,
Esuriéntes implévit bonis, * et dívites dimísit inánes.
Suscepit Israëġ, puerum suum, * recordatus misericordiæ suæ,
Sicut locúsus est ad patres nostros, * Abraham et sémini ejus in sæcula.
Glória Patri...*

My soul * doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced * in God my Savior;
For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; * behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed;
For He that is mighty hath done great things to me, * and holy is His Name;
And His mercy is from generation unto generations, * to them that fear Him.
He hath shown might in His arm, * He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of
their heart.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, * and hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, * and the rich He hath sent away
empty.
He hath received Israel His servant, * being mindful of His mercy,
According as He spoke to our Fathers, * to Abraham and to His seed forever.
Glory be to the Father...

20 - Recessional: organ suite of faux-bourçons in dialogue, Anonymous (16th Century).



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