Hymns for Corpus Christi

Introduction

When Pope Urban IV instituted the feast of Corpus Christi in 1264 for the universal Church he commissioned St Thomas Aquinas to compose the texts for Mass and the Office. These included the hymns for the various hours of the Divine Office which are still sung to this day.

One of the characteristics of all the hymns is that two verses, generally the last two, have been sung independently of the whole text. For example, the last two verses of the hymn for Evening Prayer (Pange lingua) are familiar in their own right — Tantum ergo Sacramentum. In this document it has been indicated in the title for the Hymns.

As well as St Thomas Aquinas’ original Latin texts English translations have also been provided. Where possible, two have been included. The first from one of the great translators of hymns in the 19th century; the second from James Quinn sj, who probably made the most important contribution to Catholic hymnody in these islands in the latter half of the 20th century. It is his translations which are used in the current Divine Office. Recently a collected edition of his hymns, Hymns for all seasons edited by Paul Inwood, has been published by Oregon Catholic Press (2017).

A couple of additional texts have been included. Adoro te devote though not written for the Office of Corpus Christi it is understood originally to have been a private devotion of St Thomas Aquinas. O sacrum convivium is the Magnificat antiphon for Evening Prayer II and as well as an eloquent expression of the theology of the feast it is a text which has been set by many composers.

At the end of each text an excerpt of the chant setting has been included. These have been taken from Gregobase [https://gregobase.selapa.net] which provides freely downloadable versions of these chants and much else. After each text a note is included about the meter and settings of the English translations.

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Acknowledgements

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Evening Prayer I & II

Pange Lingua (Tantum Ergo)

Pange, lingua, gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
quem in mundi pretium
fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit Gentium.

Nobis datus, nobis natus
ex intacta Virgine,
et in mundo conversatus,
sparso verbi semine,
sui moras incolatus
mire clausit ordine.

In supremae nocte coenae
recumbens cum fratribus
observata lege plene
cibis in legalibus,
cibus turbae duodenae
se dat suis manibus.

Verbum caro, panem verum
verbo carnem efficit:
fitque sanguis Christi merum,
et si sensus deficit,
ad firmandum cor sincerum
sola fides sufficit.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
veremur cernui:
et antiquum documentum
novo cedat ritui:
praestet fides supplementum
sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitoque
laus et jubilatio,
salus, honor, virtus quoque
sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
compar sit laudatio.
Amen. Alleluja.

Of the glorious body telling,
O my tongue, its mysteries sing,
and the blood, all price excelling,
which the world’s eternal king,
in a noble womb once dwelling,
shed for this world’s ransoming.

Giv’n for us, for us descending,
of a virgin to proceed,
man with man in converse blending,
scattered he the gospel seed,
’till his sojourn drew to ending,
which he closed in wondrous deed.

At the last great supper lying,
circled by his brethren’s band,
meekly with the law complying,
first, he finished its command.
Then, immortal food supplying,
gave himself with his own hand.

Word made flesh, by word he maketh
very bread his flesh to be;
man in wine Christ’s blood partaketh,
and if senses fail to see,
faith alone the true heart waketh,
to behold the mystery.

Therefore, we before him bending,
this great sacrament revere;
types and shadows have their ending,
for the newer rite is here;
faith, our outward sense befriending,
makes the inward vision clear.

Glory let us give, and blessing,
to the Father and the Son;
honour, might and praise addressing,
while eternal ages run;
ever too his love confessing,
who from both, with both is one.

Hail our Saviour’s glorious Body,
which his Virgin Mother bore;
hail the Blood which, shed for sinners,
did a broken world restore;
hail the sacrament most holy
flesh and Blood of Christ adore!

To the Virgin for our healing,
his own Son the Father send;
from the Father’s love proceeding
sower, seed, and Word descends;
wondrous life of Word incarnate
with his greatest winder ends!

On that paschal evening see him
with the chosen twelve recline,
to the old law still obedient
in its feats of love divine;
love divine, the new law giving,
gives himself as Bread and Wine!

By his word the Word almighty
makes of bread his flesh indeed;
wine becomes his very life-blood;
fait God’s living Word must heed!
Faith alone may safely guide us
where the senses cannot lead!

Come, adore this wondrous presence;
bow to Christ, the source of grace!
Here is kept the ancient promise
of God’s earthly dwelling-place!
Sight is blind before God’s glory,
faith alone may see his face!

Glory be to God the Father,
praise to his co-equal Son,
adoration to the Spirit,
bond of love, in Godhead one!
Blest be God by all creation
joyously while ages run!

St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74)

tr. J. M. Neale, (1818–66) E. Caswall
(1814–78), and others

tr. James Quinn sj (1919–2010)

Both English translations follow the same meter as the Latin 87 87 87. As Tantum ergo was traditionally always sung to accompany benediction of the Blessed Sacrament a wide variety of tunes were composed or adapted for this text.
Hymn. 3.

P

Ange lingua glo-ri-ó-si Córpo-ris mysté-

ri-um, Sanguinísque pre-ti-ó-si, Quem in mundi

pré-ti-um Fructus ventris gene-ró-si Rex effú-dit

génti-um.

* 5. Tantum ergo Sacraméntum Vene-rémur cérnu-

i: Et antiquum documéntum Novo cedat ri-tu-i:

Præstet fi-des supplémen-tum Sénsu-um de-

féc-tu-i.

6. Ge-ni-tó-ri, Ge-ni-tóque Laus et ju-bi-lá-ti-o,

Sa-lus, honor, virtus quoque Sit et bene-dicti-o:

Pro-cédénti ab utróque Compar sit lau-dá-ti-o.

A-men.
Hymn for Office of Readings

Sacris solemniis (Panis Angelicus)

Sacris solemniis
iuncta sint gaudia,
et ex praecordiis
sonent praecordia;
recedant vetera,
nova sint omnia,
corda, voces, et opera.

Welcome with jubilee
this glad solemnity
from the full heart which sings
both clear and high;
let the old types of grace
to the new things give place,
new hearts, new works join with
new songs of joy.

Sing of that solemn eve
when, as true hearts believe,
Christ gave the lamb and gave
the paschal bread
unto the chosen band
met for the high command
God had of old on their
forefathers laid.

Now, when the feast was done,
to each beloved one
gave he his body true,
the Lord of heaven.

Yea, by those hands so blest
unto each single guest,
E'en as to all, was the whole Christ
now given.

Weak and unstable band
they ate from his own hand
his flesh; while he raised up
their drooping hearts
with the new mystic wine
of his own blood divine:
‘Drink all the cup which my own
love imparts.’

Thus did our blessed King
trust his new offering
only to servants in his priestly line.
They now will give to each
what they have once received
to all who draw near for the gift divine.

At this great feast of love
let joyful praise resound,
let heartfelt homage now ascend
to heaven's height:
ring out the reign of sin;
ring in the reign of grace;
a world renewed acclaims its King,
through veiled in sight.

Recall that night when Christ
proclaims his law of love,
and shows himself the Lamb of God
and great high priest:
the sinless One, made sin,
for sinners gives his all,
and shares with us his very self
as Paschal feast.

Noctis recolitur
cena novissima,
qua Christus creditor
agnum et azyma
dedisse fratribus,
iuxta legitima
priscis indulta patribus.

Sing of that solemn eve
when, as true hearts believe,
Christ gave the lamb and gave
the paschal bread
unto the chosen band
met for the high command
God had of old on their
forefathers laid.

Now, when the feast was done,
to each beloved one
gave he his body true,
the Lord of heaven.

Yea, by those hands so blest
unto each single guest,
E'en as to all, was the whole Christ
now given.

Weak and unstable band
they ate from his own hand
his flesh; while he raised up
their drooping hearts
with the new mystic wine
of his own blood divine:
‘Drink all the cup which my own
love imparts.’

Thus did our blessed King
trust his new offering
only to servants in his priestly line.
They now will give to each
what they have once received
to all who draw near for the gift divine.

At this great feast of love
let joyful praise resound,
let heartfelt homage now ascend
to heaven's height:
ring out the reign of sin;
ring in the reign of grace;
a world renewed acclaims its King,
through veiled in sight.

Recall that night when Christ
proclaims his law of love,
and shows himself the Lamb of God
and great high priest:
the sinless One, made sin,
for sinners gives his all,
and shares with us his very self
as Paschal feast.
Panis angelicus
fit panis hominum;
dat panis caelicus
figuris terminum;
O res mirabilis:
manducat Dominum
pauper, servus et humilis.

Old forms are cast aside,
for truth and grace abide;
All eat the bread of the angels,
bread of heaven.
To feed the lowly heart
the poor, the cast apart,
O wondrous gift that Christ
himself has given

O triune Deity,
hear how we cry to thee,
Cme now to us who kneel here
to adore thee;
lead us on thine own way
up to the realms of day,
your dwelling place of holiness
and glory.

The bread that angels eat
becomes our food on earth,
God sends his manna, living Bread,
from heaven above;
what wonders now we see:
those who are last and least
receive their Lord as food and drink,
his pledge of love.

Three persons, yet one God,
be pleased to hear our prayer:
come down in power to seek your own,
dispel our night;
teach us your word of truth;
guide us along your way;
bring us at last to dwell with you
in endless light.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74)
tr. J D Aylward (1813–72) alt.
James Quinn sj (1919–2010)

The meter of the Aylward translation was 66 66 9 66 — for which there is no familiar hymn tune. It has been altered so that it might be sung to DOWN AMPNEY. James Quinn prepared two versions of the text (translating the same verses). At this great feast of love has a meter of 66 84 D and can be sung to LEONI. The second version Now on this feast of love can be found in the collected edition has a meter of 66 66 66 8 which follows the Latin text.
Morning Prayer

Verbum Supernum (O Salutaris)

Verbum supernum prodiens, 
nec Patris linquens dexteram, 
ad opus suum exiens, 
venit ad vitae vesperam.

In mortem a discipulo 
suis tradendus aemulis, 
prius in vitae ferculo 
se tradidit discipulis.

Quibus sub bina specie 
carnem dedit et sanguinem; 
ut duplicis substantiae 
totum cibaret hominem.

Se nascens dedit socium, 
convescens in edulium, 
se moriens in pretium, 
se regnans dat in praemium.

O salutaris hostia, 
quae caeli pandis ostium, 
bella premunt hostilia; 
da robur, fer auxilium.

Unitrinoque Domino 
sit sempiterna gloria: 
qui vitam sine termino 
nobis donet in patria. Amen.

St Thomas Aquinas (1127–74) 
tr. J. M. Neale (1818-66) 
James Quinn sj (1919–2010)

Latin and English texts have the same meter 88 88 or Long Meter. The hymn is sung to a number of tunes.

Hymn. 8.

Erbum su-pérmum pró-di- ens, Nec Patris
linquens déxte-ram, Ad opus su-um éx-i- ens, Ve-nit
ad vi-tæ véspe-ram.
Lectionary for Mass: Sequence

Lauda Sion Salvatorem

Sing forth, O Zion, sweetly sing
The praises of thy Shepherd-King,
In hymns and canticles divine;
Dare all thou canst, thou hast no song
Worthy his praises to prolong,
So far surpassing powers like thine.

Today no theme of common praise
Forms the sweet burden of thy lays —
The living, life-dispensing food —
That food which at the sacred board
Unto the brethren twelve our Lord
His parting legacy bestowed.

Then be the anthem clear and strong,
Thy fullest note, thy sweetest song,
The very music of the breast:
For now shines forth the day sublime
That brings remembrance of the time
When Jesus first his table blessed.

Within our new King’s banquet-hall
They meet to keep the festival
That closed the ancient paschal rite:
The old is by the new replaced; ’
The substance hath the shadow chased;
And rising day dispels the night.

Sion, sing in exultation,
sing your song of jubiliation,
sing in praise of Christ, your King.
Sing to Christ in adoration,
sing the new song of salvation,
homage to your Saviour bring.

Sing of love beyond your telling,
love from Jesus’ heart upwelling,
giving all that love can give.
See him as his life is ending,
to his chosen friends attending,
giving all that all might live.

Greet your Lord with acclamation,
sing with joy in celebration
of his gift of living bread.
Let your mind with love be dwelling
on his gift, all gifts excelling,
gift by which your heart is fed.

See the King his table spreading,
see the Lamb his lifeblood shedding,
see in blood the New Law sealed.
All is new, the old has vanished,
all is real, with shadows banished,
what was hidden stands revealed.
Quod in coena Christus gessit,
faciendum hoc expressit
in sui memoriam.
Docti sacris institutis,
panem, vinum in salutis
consecramus hostiam.

Dogma datur christianis,
quod in carnem transit panis,
et vinum in sanguinem.
Quod non capis, quod non
vides,
amiosa firmat fides,
praeter rerum ordinem.

Sub diversis speciebus,
signis tantum, et non rebus,
laten res eximiae.
Caro cibus, sanguis potus:
manet tamen Christus totus
sub utraque speciei.

A sumente non concisus,
non contractus, non divisus:
integer accipitur.
Sumit unus, sumunt mille:
quantum isti, tantum ille:
nec sumptus consumitur.

Christ willed what he himself had done
Should be renewed while time
should run
In memory of his parting hour:
Thus, tutored in his school divine
We consecrate the bread and wine
And lo — a Host of saving power.

This faith to Christian men is given —
Bread is made flesh by words
from heaven:
Into his blood the wine is turned:
What thought baffles nature's powers
Of sense and sight? This faith of ours
Proves more than nature e'er discerned.

Concealed beneath the two-fold sign,
Meet symbols of the gifts divine,
There lie the mysteries adored:
The living body is our food;
Our drink the ever-precious blood;
In each, one undivided Lord.

Not he that eateth it divides
The sacred food, which whole abides
Unbroken still, nor knows decay;
Be one, or be a thousand fed,
They eat alike that living bread
Which, still received, n'er wastes away.

The good, the guilty share therein,
With sure increase of grace or sin,
The ghostly life, or ghostly death:
Death to the guilty; to the good
Immortal life. See how one food
Man's joy or woe accomplisheth.

We break the Sacrament; but hold
And firm thy faith shall keep its hold;
Deem not the whole doth more enfold
Than in the fractured part resides:
Deem not that Christ doth broken lie;
'Tis but the sign that meets the eye;
The hidden deep reality
In all its fullness still abides.

Behold the bread of angels, sent
For pilgrims in their banishment,
The bread for God's true
children meant,
That may not unto dogs be given:
Oft in the olden types foreshowed;
In Isaac on the altar bowed,
And in the ancient paschal food,
And in the manna sent from heaven.

Listen, Christ's own words obeying,
hear him now command you, saying:
‘Do this in my memory’.
Gifts now offer, love expressing,
faith now bring, his presence blessing,
where no human eye can see.

Christians, let your faith
grow stronger:
what was bread is bread no longer,
blood is here where once was wine.
Touch and sight are here deceivers,
mind and heart, be true believers:
truth is here beneath the sign.

Bread and wine are here concealing
what to faith God is revealing:
outward signs his glory hide.
Bread becomes its very Giver,
wine redemption’s mighty river,
flowing from the Saviour’s side.

When we eat the bread of gladness,
there is here no cause for sadness:
Christ can suffer pain no more.
One or many, each is given
whole, entire, the bread of heaven:
mortal minds can but adore.

Bad and good, in equal measure,
find the selfsame hidden treasure,
with unequal loss and gain.
Here the good receive salvation,
sinners earn their condemnation:
from one table, joy or pain.

When you see the host divided,
let your faith by this be guided:
every fragment Christ contains.
Risen body is not broken,
only outward sign and token:
Christ his living self remains.

Praise to Jesus, bread from heaven,
angels' food to pilgrims given,
seal of peace on sin forgiven,
God the Father's gift of love.
In one perfect immolation
see fulfilled for all creation
Isaac's offering, lamb's oblation,
manna raining from above.
Bone pastor, panis vere,
Iesu, nostri miserere:
Tu nos pasce, nos tuere,
Tu nos bona fac videre
in terra viventium.

Come then, good shepherd,
bread divine,
Still show to us thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us still, still keep us thine;
So may we see thy glories shine
In fields of immortality;

O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,
Our present food, our future rest,
Come, make us each thy chosen guest,
Co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest
With saints whose dwelling is
with thee.

Shepherd-King, we bow before you,
living bread, let all adore you;
come to feed us, come, possess us,
with your Holy Spirit bless us
from your throne beyond the skies.

Jesus, Lord, the ever-living,
ever-loving, all-forgiving,
on our pilgrim journey feed us,
from his heavenly banquet lead us
to our home in Paradise.

Amen. Alleluia.

The Sequence at Masses on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord is optional. It may be sung in full or in a shorter form of just the last 3 verses (from Ecce Panis Angelorum, Behold the bread of angels).

The chant version is given in an appendix. The challenge of singing the Lectionary version is that the meter is not the same as the Latin, so can not be sung to the chant, and the length of the verses varies. The line is consistent throughout — 8 syllables. To be sung to familiar hymn tunes this suggests one of 88 88 88 and one of 88 88 (LM). The final two verses have 5 lines and so the last line might be repeated.

The Quinn text, described as a paraphrase in the complete edition, is intended to be sung to the Latin chant.

Other texts

Adoro Te Devote

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,
Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas;
Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit,
Quia te contemplans
totum deficit.

Visus, tactus, gustus
in te fallitur,
Sed auditu solo tuto creditur.
Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius;
Nil hoc verbo veritatis verius.

Godhead here in hiding,
whom I do adore,
Masked by these bare shadows,
shape and nothing more,
See, Lord, at thy service
low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder
at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting
are in thee deceived:
How says trusty hearing?
that shall be believed;
What God's Son has told me,
take for truth I do;
Truth himself speaks truly
or there's nothing true.

O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore thee,
who truly art within the forms
before me;
to thee my heart I bow
with bended knee,
as failing quite in contemplating thee.

Sight, touch, and taste in thee
are each deceived,
the ear alone most safely is believed:
I believe all the Son of God has spoken;
than truth's own word there is no
truer token.
In cruce latebat sola Deitas,  
At hic latet simul et Humanitas,  
Ambo tamen credens  
atque confitens,  
Peto quod petivit latro  
pœnitens.

Plagas, sicut Thomas,  
on intueor:  
Deum tamen meum te confiteor.  
Fac me tibi semper  
magis credere,  
In te spem habere, te diligere.

O memoriale mortis Domini!  
Panis vivus, vitam  
præstans homini!  
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,  
Et te illi semper dulce sapere.

Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine,  
Me immundum munda  
tuo sanguine:  
Cujus una stilla salvum facere  
Totum mundum quit  
ab omni scelere.

Jesu, quem velatum  
nunc aspicio,  
Oro, fiat illud quod tam sitio:  
Ut te revelata cernens facie,  
Visu sim beátus tuae gloríæ.  
Amen

On the cross thy godhead  
made no sign to men,  
Here thy very manhood  
steals from human ken:  
Both are my confession,  
both are my belief,  
And I pray the prayer  
of the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas,  
wounds I cannot see,  
But can plainly call thee  
Lord and God as he;  
Let me to a deeper faith  
daily nearer move,  
Daily make me harder hope  
and dearer love.

O thou our reminder  
of Christ crucified,  
Living Bread, the life of us  
for whom he died,  
Lend this life to me then:  
feed and feast my mind,  
There be thou the sweetness  
man was meant to find.

Bring the tender tale  
true of the Pelican;  
Bathe me, Jesu Lord,  
in what thy bosom ran—  
Blood whereof a single drop  
has power to win  
All the world forgiveness  
of its world of sin.

Jesu, whom I look at  
shrouded here below,  
I beseech thee send me  
what I thirst for so,  
Some day to gaze on thee  
face to face in light  
And be blest for ever  
with thy glory's sight.  
Amen.

St Thomas Aquinas (1227-74)  
Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89)  
tr. Edward Caswall (1814-78)

This text was not written for the Office of Corpus Christi. It is now understood to have been among the Saint’s paper and was originally a personal devotional text. The music is much later from a lat 17th century Paris Processional suggesting that it was a while before it entered the liturgy.

The translation by Hopkins is intended to be sung to the chant. There is also a Quinn translation: Jesus, Lord of Glory.
O sacrum convivium

O sacred feast
in which we partake of Christ:
his sufferings are remembered,
our minds are filled with his grace
and we receive a pledge of the glory
that is to be ours,
alleluia.

How holy this feast
in which Christ is our food:
his passion is recalled,
and we receive a pledge
of the glory to come.
Alleluia.

St Thomas Aquinas (1227-74)

Though the not one of the hymns of the Office of Corpus Christi O sacrum convivium has proved a popular text for composers to set to music. It is the Magnificat Antiphon for Evening Prayer II.
Appendix: Lauda Sion Salvatorem

Lauda Sion Salvatorem, Lauda ducem et pastorem, In hymnis et canci-
is. 2. Quantum po-tes, tantum aude: Qui a maior omni laude, Nec laudare, suf-
cis. 3. Laudis theuma spe-ci-
lis, Panis vi-vus et vi-
alis Hó-die propóni-tur.

4. Quem in sacra mensa coe-
nae, Turbae fratrum duodénae Da-tum non ambi-gi-tur. 5. Sit laus ple-
na, sit so-nó-ra, Sit jucunda, sit de-có-ra Men-
tis ju-bi-lá-ti-o. 6. Di-
es e-nim sol-émnis á-gi-tur,

In qua mensæ prima re-
co-li-tur Hu-jus insti-tú-ti-o.

7. In hac mensæ no-
vi Re-gis, Novum Pascha no-
vaé le-gis, Pha-se ve-tus térmi-nat. 8. Ve-tustá-tem

nó-vi-tas, Umbram fu-gat vé-ri-tas, Noctem lux
e-limi-nat. 9. Quod in cœna Christus gessit,

Fa-ci-éndum hoc exprés-sit In su-i memó-ri-am.

10. Docti sacris insti-tú-tis, Panem, vinum in sa-lú-tis

Consecrámus hósti-am. 11. Dogma da-tur christi-á-
nis, Quod in car- nem transit pa-nis, Et vinum in

sángui-nem. 12. Quod non ca-pis, quod non vi-des,

Animó-sa firmat fi-des, Prae-ter re-rum órdi-nem.

13. Sub di-vérsis spe-ci-ébus, Signis tantum, et

non rebus, La-tent res ex-ími-æ. 14. Ca-ro ci-bus,
sanguis potus: Manet tamen Christus totus

Sub utraque spe-cie. 15. A sumente non concisus,

Non confactus, non divisus: Integer ac-qi-tur.

16. Sumit unus, sumunt mil-le: Quantum isti, tantum

ille: Nec sumptus consu-mitur. 17. Sumunt boni,

sumunt ma-li: Sorte tamen inaequa-li, Vi-tae vel

integra-tus. 18. Mors est malis, vi-ta bonis:

Vi-de paris sumptio-nis Quam sit dispar exi-tus.

19. Fracto demum sacramento, Ne va-ci-les, sed

memento Tantum esse sub fragmento, Quantum

to-to ti-gi-tur. 20. Nulla re-i fit scissu-ra: Signi
tantum fit fractú-ra, Qua nec sta-tus, nec sta-tú-ra

Signá-ti mi-nú-i-tur. 21. ECCE PANIS ANGELÓRUM,

Factus ci-bus vi-a-tó-rum: Ve-re pa-nis fi-li-ó-rum,

Non mitténdus cá-ni-bus. 22. In fi-gú-ris præ-si-

gná-tur, Cum I-sa-ac immo-lá-tur, Agnus Paschæ
de-pu-tá-tur, Da-tur manna pátri-bus. 23. Bone pa-

stor, pa-nis ve-re, Je-su, nostri mi-se-ré-re: Tu

nos pasce, nos tu-é-re, Tu nos bona fac vi-dé-re

In terra vi-vénti-um. 24. Tu qui cuncta scis et va-

les, Cohe-rédes et sodá-les Fac sanctó-rum ci-

A-men. (Alle-lú-ia. at Mass only.)