

Decus morum, dux minorum

Hymn for the feast of St Francis. Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale Augusta, MS 431 (G 20), fols 150v–151. Edition by Leah Stuttard.

The words are the Lauds hymn from the rhymed Office of St Francis written by Julian of Speyer in the 1230s, only a few years after Francis died. The Perugia manuscript gives a polyphonic setting; in our edition the polyphony (verses 1, 3 and 8) alternates with plainchant sung by the tenors (verses 2 and 6), with organ interludes between. The verses are shown here in the order we sing them. The hymn plays on Francis's 'prize' (bravium, the athlete's crown of 1 Corinthians 9), on the Vine of John 15, and on the stigmata as the 'sign of the King'.

English translation

Latin (as sung)

Verse 1 (polyphony)

Glory of virtues, leader of the Friars Minor,
Francis, who holds the prize,
is given over to life in you, the Vine,
O Christ, Redeemer of all.

*Decus morum, dux minorum,
Franciscus tenens bravium,
In te, vite, datur vitae,
Christe Redemptor omnium.*

Verse 2 (plainchant)

Let the brother clap his hands: the Father reigns,
a fellow citizen with the citizens of heaven.
Let weeping cease, let the company sing,
let heaven exult with praises.

*Plaudat frater, regnat Pater
Concivis celi civibus:
Cedat fletus, psallat cetus,
Exsultet celum laudibus.*

Verse 3 (polyphony)

Taken from the earth, given to heaven:
the working of miracles proves it.
Therefore he lives, for he has entered upon
the eternal gifts of Christ.

*Demptum solo, datum polo,
Signorum probant opera,
Ergo vivit, nam adivit
Eterna Christi munera.*

Verse 6 (plainchant)

The King's sign marks the worthy leader
in his hands and in his side:
light draws near, night retreats,
now that the day-star has risen.

*Regis signum ducem dignum
Insignit manu, latere:
Lux accedit, nox recedit,
Jam lucis orto sidere.*

Verse 8 (polyphony)

Drive your flock, O leader, to the King;
crusher of the cunning enemy,
lead us and bring us in
to the supper of the provident Lamb.

*Mina gregem, dux ad Regem,
Collisor hostis callidi,
Nos conducas et inducas
Ad cenam Agni providi.*

Graduale: Requiem aeternam dona eis

Blasius Amon (c. 1560–1590). From *Patrocinium musices: Missae cum breves tum quatuor vocum*, Munich, 1591.

Blasius Amon was a Tyrolean composer who became a Franciscan friar in Vienna near the end of his short life; this Mass for the Dead was printed the year after he died. The Gradual is the chant sung between the readings at a Requiem Mass. Its first sentence is the prayer that gives the Requiem its name; the second is a verse from Psalm 112 (111 in the Latin numbering).

English translation

Latin (as sung)

Gradual

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Verse (Psalm 112:7)

The just shall be held in everlasting remembrance;
they shall not be afraid of evil tidings.

*In memoria aeterna erunt iusti,
ab auditione mala non timebunt.*

Qui nos fecit ex nichilo

Benedicamus Domino trope. Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale Augusta, MS 431 (G 20), fol. 161, and Florence, BNC, MS Panciatichiano 27, fol. 17. Edited and arranged by Leah Stuttard.

'Benedicamus Domino' (Let us bless the Lord) is the short dismissal that ends the daily Offices. In the Middle Ages singers loved to expand it with extra words and music for feast days, and this is one such expansion, found in two Franciscan-connected manuscripts. We sing the first stanza, then the second, then return to the first, with instrumental interludes between the sections.

English translation

Latin (as sung)

Stanza 1

To him who made us out of nothing,
to the Father and to his Son,
and with them the Holy Comforter:
let us bless the Lord.

*Qui nos fecit ex nichilo,
Patri eiusque Filio,
Sancto simul Paraclito:
Benedicamus Domino.*

Stanza 2

The feast day is here for us,
and the glorious solemnity;
now its brightness has shone out:
let us bless the Lord.

*Adest nobis festivitas
et preclaram solemnitas,
Iam refulsit claritas:
Benedicamus Domino.*

Stanza 1 (repeated)

To him who made us out of nothing,
to the Father and to his Son,
and with them the Holy Comforter:
let us bless the Lord.

*Qui nos fecit ex nichilo,
Patri eiusque Filio,
Sancto simul Paraclito:
Benedicamus Domino.*

Dies irae, dies illa

Costanzo Porta (c. 1529–1601), from the *Missa mortuorum*. Words attributed to Thomas of Celano, OFM.

The Dies irae is the sequence of the Requiem Mass, and by long tradition its author is Thomas of Celano, the Franciscan friar who wrote the first biographies of St Francis. Costanzo Porta, himself a Franciscan, set the whole sequence for five voices. The choir's part is the first two stanzas, marked below; the complete text is given so that the whole poem can be followed. The metre is a relentless trochaic tread, three rhyming lines to a stanza, softening only at the end where the rhyme scheme breaks and the poem turns into a prayer.

English translation

Latin (as sung)

Stanza 1 (choir)

Day of wrath, that day
will dissolve the world in ashes,
as David and the Sibyl bear witness.

*Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat seclum in favilla:
Teste David cum Sibylla.*

Stanza 2 (choir)

How great a trembling there will be
when the Judge is about to come
to examine all things strictly!

*Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus!*

Stanza 3

The trumpet, scattering its wondrous sound
through the tombs of every land,
will gather all before the throne.

*Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.*

Stanza 4

Death and nature will stand amazed
when creation rises again
to answer the one who judges.

*Mors stupebit et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Judicanti responsura.*

Stanza 5

A written book will be brought forth
in which everything is contained,
by which the world shall be judged.

*Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.*

Stanza 6

So when the Judge takes his seat,
whatever is hidden will appear:
nothing will remain unpunished.

*Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.*

Stanza 7

What then shall I, poor wretch, say?
Which advocate shall I ask for,
when even the just are scarcely safe?

*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus?*

Stanza 8

King of dreadful majesty,
who freely saves those who are to be saved,
save me, fount of mercy.

*Rex tremendae majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis.*

Stanza 9

Remember, merciful Jesus,
that I am the reason for your journey:
do not let me be lost on that day.

*Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae:
Ne me perdas illa die.*

English translation	Latin (as sung)
Stanza 10	
Seeking me, you sat down weary; you redeemed me by suffering the cross: let such labour not be in vain.	<i>Quaerens me, sedisti lassus: Redemisti crucem passus: Tantus labor non sit cassus.</i>
Stanza 11	
Just judge of vengeance, grant the gift of forgiveness before the day of reckoning.	<i>Juste judex ultionis, Donum fac remissionis Ante diem rationis.</i>
Stanza 12	
I groan like one accused; my face blushes with guilt: spare a suppliant, O God.	<i>Ingemisco, tamquam reus: Culpa rubet vultus meus: Supplici parce, Deus.</i>
Stanza 13	
You who absolved Mary Magdalene and heard the thief's prayer have given hope to me as well.	<i>Qui Mariam absolvisti, Et latronem exaudisti, Mihi quoque spem dedisti.</i>
Stanza 14	
My prayers are not worthy, but you, who are good, be kind, so that I do not burn in everlasting fire.	<i>Preces meae non sunt dignae: Sed tu bonus fac benigne, Ne perenni cremer igne.</i>
Stanza 15	
Give me a place among the sheep, and separate me from the goats, setting me on your right hand.	<i>Inter oves locum praesta, Et ab haedis me sequestra, Statuens in parte dextra.</i>
Stanza 16	
When the accursed have been confounded and consigned to the bitter flames, call me with the blessed.	<i>Confutatis maledictis, Flammis acribus addictis, Voca me cum benedictis.</i>
Stanza 17	
I pray, kneeling and bowed down, my heart crushed like ashes: take care of my ending.	<i>Oro supplex et acclinis, Cor contritum quasi cinis: Gere curam mei finis.</i>
Stanza 18	
That day will be full of tears, on which from the ashes rises guilty man to be judged.	<i>Lacrimosa dies illa, Qua resurget ex favilla Judicandus homo reus.</i>
Stanza 19	
Spare him, then, O God: merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest. Amen.	<i>Huic ergo parce, Deus: Pie Jesu Domine, Dona eis requiem. Amen.</i>

Saynt Frances, to the I say

Words by John Audelay (fl. 1426), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 302, fol. 32r. Sung to the music of 'Pray for us the Prince of Peace' from the Trinity Carol Roll.

John Audelay was a blind and deaf chaplain at Haughmond Abbey in Shropshire, and this is the only medieval English carol in honour of St Francis. The burden (refrain) returns after each verse. The English on the left is a modern rendering of Audelay's fifteenth-century Shropshire dialect; the spelling on the right is what we sing. A few words to watch: 'preynt' is print, 'sonde' is a message sent, 'wond' is shrink from, 'chent' is ruined, 'fyndis fray' is the devil's attack.

English translation

Middle English (as sung)

Burden

Saint Francis, to you I say:
keep your brothers safe both night and day.

*Saynt Frances, to the I say,
Saue thi breder both nyght and day.*

Verse 1

A holy confessor you were, one
who lived in contemplation,
meditating on Christ's passion,
he who suffered death on Good Friday.

*A hole confessoure thou were hone
And levydist in contemplacioun,
To thyng on Cristis passioun,
That sofyrd deth on Good Fryday.*

Verse 2

His passion burned in you so fervently
that he appeared to you in person;
upon your body he set his print,
his five wounds; there is no denying it.

*His passion was in the so fervent
That he aperd to the present;
Vpon thi body he set his preynt,
His v wondis, hit is no nay.*

Verse 3

Christ granted you a special grace,
because you had pity on his passion:
to fetch your brothers out of purgatory,
who lie there in a pitiful state.

*Crist he grawnt the specialy,
Fore on his passion thou hadist pete,
To feche thi breder out of purgatori,
That lyin ther in reful aray.*

Verse 4

You thanked Christ for his sweet message
and planned to go to the Holy Land;
for fear of death you would not shrink
from teaching the people your Christian faith.

*Thou thongis Crist of his swete sonde
And thoghtist to go to the Holy Londe;
Fore dred of deth thou woldist not wond
To teche the pepil thi Cristyn fay.*

Verse 5

Then Christ, who knew your intention well,
turned you from that desire
and bade you make your testament
and 'Come to me for ever and always.'

*Then Crist he knew well then entent
And turned the out of that talent
And bede the make thi testament
And 'Come to me fore ens and ay.'*

Verse 6

'Ah, holy Francis, now I see
that for my love you would die;
you shall have everlasting joy,
which you have longed for many a day.'

*'A, hole Frawnces, now I se
For my loue that thou woldist dye;
Thou schalt have joy perpetuale,
Thou hast dyssired mone a day.'*

English translation**Middle English (as sung)**

Verse 7

His holy Rule for the religious life
he wrote down at once for his brothers,
and begged them, for Christ's passion,
to keep it well both night and day.

*His hole reule of religiowne
To his breder he wrote anon
And prayd ham, fore Cristis passiowne,
To kepe hit wel both nyght and day.*

Verse 8

Let us pray to Francis, who is here among us,
to keep safe his brothers and his community,
that they may never be shamed nor ruined
by wicked men nor by the devil's assault.

*Pray we to Frawnses, that beth present,
To saue his breder and his couent,
That thai be neuer chamyd ne chent
With wyckid man ne fyndis fray.*

The burden is sung again after the last verse.

Lullay, my child, and wepe no more

London, British Library, Add. MS 5666, fol. 2v (music survives for the burden only). Music for the strophes by Leah Stuttard.

A fifteenth-century lullaby carol in a northern English dialect. The singer overhears Mary rocking the cradle, and then the Christ child himself speaks: he cannot sleep, he is cold, and he already knows what lies ahead of him. It is tender and dark at the same time, which is why it sits so well beside the Franciscan crib. The burden is sung at the start and again at the end. On the right is the spelling we sing; 'sauy' is saw, 'crache' is crib, 'rode' is cross, 'thirll' is pierce.

English translation

Middle English (as sung)

Burden

'Lullay, my child, and weep no more;
sleep and be still now;
the King of Bliss is your Father,
and thus it is his will.'

*'Lullay, my child, and wepe no more;
Sclepe and be now styll;
The Kyng of Blis thi Fader he es,
And thus it es his wyll.'*

Strophe 1

The other night I saw a sight:
a maiden keeping watch over a cradle,
and all the while she sang, and said between,
'Lullay, my child, and sleep.'

*This ender nithgt I sau y ha sithgt,
Ha may ha credill kepe,
Hande euer schuy sang hande sayde in mang,
'Lullay, my child, ande slepe.'*

Strophe 2

'I cannot sleep; I can only weep;
I am so woebegone;
I would sleep, but I am cold,
and I have no clothes at all.'

*'I may nocht slepe; I may bot wepe;
I ham so wo begony;
Slepe I wolde, bot me hes colde,
Hande clothes hauf I nony.'*

Strophe 3

The child was sweet, and sorely he wept,
and it seemed to me he kept saying,
'Mother dear, what am I doing here?
Why am I laid in a manger?'

*The chylde was swet, hande sor he wepe,
Hande euer me thoht he sayde,
'Moder dere, wat doy I here?
In crache wy ham I layde?'*

Strophe 4

'Adam's guilt, which has ruined mankind,
that sin grieves me full sore;
Man, for your sake I shall be here
thirty years and more.'

*'Adam gilt that man has spilde,
That syn rues me fole sor;
Man, for the here sal I be
Thirty yere and mor.'*

Strophe 5

'Sorrows to endure, and I shall die,
and I shall hang upon the cross;
my wounds shall be wet, the world's ills made good,
and I shall give my flesh to bleed.'

*'Dolles to dreye, ande I sale dye,
Ande hyng I sale on the rode;
My woundys to wete, my bals to bethe,
Ande gif my fleches to blode.'*

Strophe 6

'A spear so sharp shall pierce my heart
for the deed that man has done;
Father of Bliss, why have you
forsaken me, your son?'

*'A spere so charpe sale thirll my hert
For the dede that man has done;
Fadere of Blys, war tu thou has
Forsakin me, thi sone?'*

The burden is sung again, in four parts, after the last strophe.

Laudiam l'amor divino

Innocenzio de Dammonis, Laude Libro Secondo (Venice: Petrucci, 1508). A lauda for the Nativity.

A four-part lauda from the first printed collections of laude, published in Venice in 1508. Dammonis was a Venetian priest and a member of the Congregation of San Giorgio in Alga. The poem is a Christmas lauda: the singer is drunk with love for the newborn child. Our edition sets the ripresa (refrain) and the first two stanzas; the remaining stanzas of the poem are given afterwards for those who want to follow the whole text.

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Ripresa (refrain)

Let us praise the divine love,
which is Jesus, that beautiful little boy,
who is born so very small.

*Laudiam l'amor divino,
Ch'è Jesù quel bel fantino,
Ch'è nato picolino.*

Stanza 1

Let us praise with all our mind
Jesus, who is present here;
dead is anyone who does not feel it,
that divine fire.

*Laudiam con tutta mente
Jesù che qui presente;
Morto è che no lo sente,
Quello foco divino.*

Stanza 2

Love sets me wholly ablaze,
it seizes my whole heart;
more than strength he gives me,
Mary, that little son of yours.

*L'amor tutto m'accende,
Tutto lo cor mi prende;
Più che virtù me rende
Maria el tuo figliolino.*

Further stanzas of the poem (not in our edition)

Stanza 3

Your son, Mary,
you who are called divine,
has made my soul
drunk with a warm wine.

*El to figliol, Maria,
Che sei chiamata dia,
Facta ha l'anima mia
Ebria d'un caldo vino.*

Stanza 4

I am intoxicated
with a noble, precious wine,
which has so transformed me
that I do not sleep, and yet I bow down.

*Io son inebriato
D'un vin alto pregiato,
Che m'ha sì alterato
Ch'io non dormo e sì inclino.*

Stanza 5

And it is not sleep that keeps me from sleeping:
I am quite beside myself
at seeing, on that day,
the divine Word born.

*Et non dormo per sonno,
Ma fuor di me sì sono,
Vedendo in quello giorno
Nato el Verbo divino.*

Stanza 6

Today the Lord is born,
that great emperor;
Jesus, our lover,
has made himself tiny.

*Oggi è nato el Signore,
Quel grande imperadore;
Jesù nostro amatore
È fatto piccino.*

English translation**Italian (as sung)****Stanza 7**

He has become an infant,
the Word of God made flesh;
on the hay he lies
that sweet little baby.

*Infante è diventato,
Verbo de Dio incarnato;
Nel fien è reclinato
Quel dolce bambolino.*

Stanza 8

Let us go with the shepherds,
all we true lovers;
let us see with great wonder
God made so small.

*Andiam con li pastori,
Ogni fin amatori;
Vediam con gran stupori
Dio fatto picolino.*

Stanza 9

O God in love,
shrunk into flesh;
love without measure,
burning ardour of the seraph.

*O Dio innamorato,
In carne abbreviato;
Amore smisurato,
Ardor del seraphino.*

Stanza 10

I burn like fire
and can find no rest;
I am consumed little by little
like a log on the hearth.

*Io ardo come foco
Et già non trovo loco;
Consumomi a poco a poco
Come legno in camino.*

O divina virgo, flore

Laudario di Cortona (Cortona, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 91), fols 32v–34v. SATB arrangement of the refrain by Leah Stuttard.

The Laudario di Cortona is the oldest surviving collection of laude with music, copied for the confraternity of Santa Maria delle Laude at the Franciscan church in Cortona in the later thirteenth century. This lauda is a litany of images for the Virgin: flower, standard, road, ladder, fountain, rose. The refrain (ripresa) returns after every stanza; our score sets the refrain in four parts with the first stanza as a solo line, and further stanzas can be sung to the same melody. The full poem is given here.

English translation	Italian (as sung)
Ripresa (refrain)	
O divine Virgin, flower fragrant with every fragrance!	<i>O divina virgo, flore aulorita d'ogne aulore!</i>
Stanza 1 (in our score)	
You are the flower that always bears seed; great grace abides in you: you carried the wine and the bread, that is, our Redeemer.	<i>Tu se' flor che sempre grane, molta gratia in te permane: tu portasti 'l vino e pane, cioè 'l nostro redemptore.</i>
Stanza 2	
Hail, kindly virgin, you who alone were worthy to carry the high standard of the most high Lord.	<i>Ave, vergene benigna, tu ke sola fosti degna di portare l'alta 'nsegna de l'altissimo signore.</i>
Stanza 3	
You are the holy, gentle virgin, you, sweetest Mary, you who are the straight road by which salvation comes.	<i>Tu es sacra virgo pia, tu, dulcissima Maria, tu ke se' la dricta via per venir de salvatione.</i>
Stanza 4	
Through you God has won the victory of heavenly glory: your crown reigns with Christ the emperor.	<i>Per te Deo n'ave victoria de la supernale gloria: la tua corona imperia cum Cristo imperadore.</i>
Stanza 5	
So many are your virtues that they embrace heaven and earth and sea: stripped bare of grace are all who are in error about you.	<i>Tante sono li tue virtude, ki cielo e terra e mare conclude: tutti so' di gratia ignudi, kiunque de te sie 'n errore.</i>
Stanza 6	
Through you grace so abounds that all heaven takes delight in it; never do the angels tire of singing your praises.	<i>Tant'abunda per te gratia ke tuto 'l cielo se ne solatia; unque de te non se sàtiano l'angeli di far laudure.</i>

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Stanza 7

With that glorious song
they make a delightful choir:
you make everyone joyful
who has hope in your love.

*De quel canto glorioso
fanno coro delectoso:
ciascun rendi gaudioso,
speranç'à de lo tuo amore.*

Stanza 8

All bring reverence,
with great courtesy and obedience,
to you, lady of power,
in whom all honour reigns,

*Tutti portan reverentia
cum molta gent'et ubidença
a te, donna de potentia,
in cui regna tutt'onore*

Stanza 9

for your blessedness
in the everlasting light;
O fountain, you who are a river
of mercy, out of love!

*per la tua beatitudine
de lo sempiternal lumine;
o fontana, ke se' flumine
de pietade, per amore!*

Stanza 10

O sweetness, in you all is made perfect
by the divine majesty;
through your holy teaching
your splendour shines out so brightly.

*O dolçor, de te s'afina
per la maiestà divina,
per la tua santa doctrina,
sì reluce 'l tuo splendore.*

Stanza 11

You are the way of truth,
you are the ladder of humility;
from you he took his humanity,
Jesus, our Redeemer!

*Tu se' via de viridade,
scala se' d'umilitade;
de te prese humanidade
Iesù, nostro redemptore!*

Stanza 12

You are the glory of paradise,
ever radiant of face;
you (glory be to you!) are laughter,
you are the rose full of sweetness.

*Tu se' gloria del paradiso,
sempre parente di viso;
tu (glori'a te!) se' riso,
tu se' rosa cum dolçore.*

Stanza 13

Hail, crowned virgin,
hail, overshadowed by God,
you who are crowned in heaven,
mother of every sinner.

*Ave, virgo incoronata,
ave, Dio obumbrata,
ke 'm ciel se' encoronata,
madre d'ogne peccatore.*

Sia laudato San Francesco

Laudario di Cortona (Cortona, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 91), fols 93–96. SATB arrangement of the refrain by Leah Stuttard.

The great Franciscan lauda of the Cortona manuscript, sung by lay people at the friars' church within living memory of the saint. It is a compact life of Francis: the stigmata on La Verna, the three Orders he founded (friars, Poor Clares, and the married penitents of the Third Order), the sermon to the birds, his miracles. The refrain returns after every stanza. Our score sets the refrain in four parts with the first stanza as a solo line; the whole poem is given here so that any stanza can be sung to the same tune. Note the pun in stanza 12: 'Francesco, franco core', Francis, frank heart.

English translation	Italian (as sung)
Ripresa (refrain)	
Praised be Saint Francis, who appeared nailed to the cross like the Redeemer.	<i>Sia laudato San Francesco, quelli c'aparve en croce fixo, como redemptore.</i>
Stanza 1 (in our score)	
He was made in the likeness of Christ: he was marked with the wounds because he had carried Christ's love written in his heart.	<i>A Cristo fo configurato: de le piaghe fo signato emperciò k'avèa portato scripto in core lu suo amore.</i>
Stanza 2	
Many messengers had been sent by the divine majesty, and the peoples had been preached to, as the scriptures tell.	<i>Molti messi avea mandati la divina maiestade e le gente predicate, como dicom le scripture.</i>
Stanza 3	
Among them there was found no one so privileged, equipped with new arms, a knight of such honour.	<i>Intra ' quali non fo trovato nullo privilegiato d'arme nove coredato, cavalieri a tant'onore.</i>
Stanza 4	
On La Verna, the holy mountain, the saint stood in great weeping; and that weeping was turned into song by the consoling seraph.	<i>A la Verna, al monte sancto, stava 'l sancto cum gran pianto; lo qual pianto li torna in canto el sarapyn consolatore.</i>
Stanza 5	
By divine inspiration he was given the understanding to save from perdition many who were sinners.	<i>Per divino spiramento folli dato intendimento de salvar da perdemento molti k'eran peccatori.</i>
Stanza 6	
When blessed Saint Francis was sent by God, the world that lay in darkness received a great splendour.	<i>Quando fo da Dio mandato San Francesco lo beato, lo mondo k'era entenebrato recevette gran splendore.</i>

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Stanza 7

To the praise of the Trinity
the three Orders he planted,
spread throughout the world,
bear fruit and fragrance.

*A laude de la Trinitade
l'ordine tre da lui plantate
per lo mondo delatate
fanno fructo cum aulore.*

Stanza 8

The poor Friars Minor
are followers of Christ:
they are teachers of the people,
preaching without error.

*Li povari frati minori
de Cristo son seguitatori:
de la gente son doctori
predicando sença errore.*

Stanza 9

The next are the precious,
gracious pearls:
virgin women enclosed
for love of the Saviour.

*L'altre son le pretiose
margarite gratiose,
vergeni donne renchiuse
per amor del Salvatore.*

Stanza 10

And the continent brothers,
married penitents,
live in the world in holiness
to serve the Creator.

*E li frati continenti,
coniugati penitenti,
stand'al mondo santamente
per servire al Creatore.*

Stanza 11

Saint Francis, you are
wholly glorious: full of longing
for God you were, overflowing,
loving with sweetness.

*San Francesco, glorioso
tutto se': desideroso
de Dio fosti, copioso,
amoroso cum dolçore.*

Stanza 12

For your holy virtue,
given wholly to God,
this sweet lauda sings
of you, Francis, frank heart!

*Per la tua virtude sancta
a Dio data tutta quanta,
questa dolçe lauda canta
di te, Francesco, franco core!*

Stanza 13

An angel in purity,
an apostle in poverty,
a martyr in desire
you were, through your great ardour.

*Angelo per puritade,
apostolo per povertade,
martiro per volutade
fosti, per lo grand'ardore.*

Stanza 14

Your holiness was shown,
and your pure faithfulness,
by the birds you preached to,
which stayed quiet and unafraid.

*Mostrò la tua sanctitade
e la pura fidelitade
l'ucelli da te predicate
stando queti et securi.*

English translation**Italian (as sung)****Stanza 15**

You preached penance,
you brought a new Rule,
you renewed the Passion,
bright star of the dawn.

*Penitentia predicasti,
nova regula portasti,
la passione renovellasti,
clara stella de l'albore.*

Stanza 16

Many sick you healed,
the blind and the crippled you healed,
several dead you raised,
giving them life and vigour.

*Molti enferme tu sanasti,
cieki et retracti tu sanasti,
morti più resuscitasti
dand'a lor vit'e vigore.*

Stanza 17

On land and sea and on every side
you are known as holy and proven;
your name is called upon
as health and gladness for all.

*Èi 'n terra e in mare et in onni lato
sancto sapere et provato;
lo tuo nome è invocato
sanitad'ogn'e baldore.*

Stanza 18

Grant us, father, as a gift
the remembrance of you,
so that our understanding
may follow you as its guide.

*Danne, padre, en donamento
lo tūo ricordamento,
ke lo nostro intendemento
te seguisca guidatore.*

Stanza 19

O lamp, sun and light,
govern us and lead us:
so be our harbour and our haven
now, always and at every hour.

*O lucerna, sole et luce,
tu ne governa e ne conduce:
sì sia nostro porto et foce
ora, sempre et tutte l'ore.*

Venite a laudare

Laudario di Cortona (Cortona, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 91), fols 1–3v. SATB arrangement of the refrain by Leah Stuttard.

The very first lauda in the Cortona manuscript, and an invitation to sing: 'Come and praise.' Each stanza is linked to the next by a chain, the last word of one stanza becoming the first word of the next (laudata / preghiam; cortesia / Cortese; villania / Villani, and so on), a device the troubadours called coblas capfinidas. The refrain returns after every stanza. Our score sets the refrain in four parts with the first stanza as a solo line; the whole poem is given here.

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Ripresa (refrain)

Come and praise,
sing for love
of the loving Virgin Mary!

*Venite a laudare,
per amore cantare
l'amorosa Vergene Maria!*

Stanza 1 (in our score)

Glorious Mary, blessed,
may you always be greatly praised:
we pray that you will plead for us
with your son, gentle virgin!

*Marìa gloriosa, biata,
sempre sia molto laudata:
preghiam ke ne si' avvocata
al tuo filioli, virgo pia!*

Stanza 2

Merciful sovereign queen,
comfort the mind that is empty;
great medicine that heals,
help us, of your courtesy.

*Pietosa regina sovrana,
conforta la mente ch'è vana,
grande medicina ke sana,
aiutane per tua cortisia.*

Stanza 3

Courteous one, who gives great gifts,
let your love not abandon us:
we pray you to forgive us
all our baseness.

*Cortese, ke fai grandi doni,
l'amor tuo non ci abbandoni:
pregante che tu ne perdoni
tutta la nostra villania.*

Stanza 4

Base sinners we have been,
loving the flesh and our sins;
we see that the world has deceived us:
let your great power defend us.

*Villani peccatori semo stati
amando la carne e li peccati;
vidén ke n'à 'l mondo engannati:
defendane la tua gran bailia.*

Stanza 5

Give us the power and the strength,
O mother, to do penance:
we wish to give you our obedience
and to live under your rule.

*Bailia ne dona e potentia,
o madre, de far penitentia:
volemo a te fare obedientia
e stare a la tua signoria.*

Stanza 6

A rule that sets the heart free
is yours, mother of love!
If the sinner only knew it,
he would come back to you, lady!

*Signoria k'afanchi lo core
è la tua, madre d'amore!
Se 'l sapesse lo peccatore
a te, donna, retornaria!*

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Stanza 7

Let man come back and trust in you,
with great hope
that you will grant him more forgiveness
than he would know how to ask.

*Retorni a tua gran fidaŋça
l'omo, cum grande sperança
ke tu li farai perdonança
più k'adomandar non saperia.*

Stanza 8

If Christian people,
who are ungrateful and base,
knew how to drink from you, sweet fountain,
they would thirst all the more to love you.

*Sapesse la gente cristiana,
k'è sconoscente e villana,
gustar da te, dolçe fontana,
d'amarte più gran sete avarea.*

Stanza 9

We hold you as our riches,
we want you, sovereign beauty:
whoever does not feel your sweetness,
too wretched is his life.

*Avénte per nostra richeça,
volénte, sovrana belleça:
ki tua non sente dolceça,
tropp'è la sua vita ria.*

Stanza 10

Wretched is the life of sinners
who do not think in their hearts:
they are shut out from such joy
as no tongue could describe.

*Ria vita dei peccatori
che non pensano nelli lor cori:
de tanto gaudio son fuori
ke lingua contar nol porrea.*

Stanza 11

They could have you as their beloved
and feel every delight,
those who bore you true allegiance
in their heart, as they should.

*Potrebber' aver per amança
e tutta sentir delectança
chi ben ti portasse liança
nel cuor, sì come dovrea.*

Stanza 12

Everyone ought to refuse,
for your sake, to love the whole world,
and praise you, sweet mother,
together with the sweetest son there is.

*Dovrebbe ciascun rifrutare,
per te, tutto 'l mondo d'amare,
a te, dolçe madre, laudare
col più dolçe filioli che sia.*

Stanza 13

May it please you, glorious one,
for whoever sings your loving lauda,
to make his mind eager
so that he praises you well, night and day.

*Siate a piacere, gloriosa,
ki canta tua lauda amorosa
de farli la mente studiosa
ke läudi ben, nocte e dia.*

Stanza 14

Shining morning star,
joy of all people,
the whole world is lost
without your strength.

*Diana stella lucente,
letitia de tutta la gente,
tutto 'l mondo è perdente
sença la tua vigoria.*

English translation**Italian (as sung)****Stanza 15**

Strong, powerful, blessed one,
for you this lauda is sung:
you are our advocate,
the most faithful there ever was.

*Vigorosa potente beata,
per te è questa laude cantata:
tu se' la nostra avvocata,
la più fedel ke mai sia.*

Chi vuol lo mondo dispreçare

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magliabechiano II.I.122 (Banco Rari 18), fols 134v–135v. SATB arrangement of the refrain by Leah Stuttard.

A lauda on the universality of death, from the great Florentine laudario known as Banco Rari 18, copied in the early fourteenth century. The same text also appears in the Cortona manuscript. It belongs to the 'memento mori' strand of Franciscan preaching: Francis himself called death 'Sister Death' in the Canticle of the Creatures. The refrain returns after every stanza; our score sets the refrain in four parts and the stanzas can be sung to the manuscript's melody. Two lines of stanza 5 are lost where the page was trimmed; the words in square brackets are supplied from another manuscript of the same lauda.

English translation

Italian (as sung)

Ripresa (refrain)

Whoever wishes to despise the world
must always keep death in mind.

*Chi vuol lo mondo dispreçare
sempre la morte de' pensare.*

Stanza 1

Death is fierce and hard and strong;
it breaks down walls and passes through gates;
it is so common a fate
that no one can escape it.

*La morte è fiera et dura e forte,
rompe mura e passa porte;
ell'è sì comune sorte
che verun ne può campare.*

Stanza 2

All people, in great trembling,
live always in fear,
because they are certain
to cross this sea.

*Tutta gente in gran tremore
vive sempre con timore,
in perciò che son sicure
di passar per questo mare.*

Stanza 3

Pope and emperor,
cardinals and great lords,
the just and the holy and sinners:
death makes them all equal.

*Papa co imperadore,
cardinali et gran signori,
giusti et sancti et peccatori
fa la morte raguagliare.*

Stanza 4

Death comes like a thief,
strips a man like a robber;
the well-fed and fresh-faced it makes fast
and changes their very skin.

*La morte viene come furone,
spoglia l'uomo come ladrone,
satolli et freschi fa digiuni
et la pelle rimutare.*

Stanza 5

[It accepts no gifts,
riches] it counts as nothing;
it wants neither friends nor kin
when it comes to the parting.

*[Non riceve donamenti,
le ricchezze] à per neente;
amici non vuole nè parenti
quando viene al seperare.*

Stanza 6

Against it no strength avails,
nor wisdom nor beauty:
towers and palaces and greatness,
it makes us abandon them all.

*Contra lei non vale forteça,
sapientia nè belleça:
torri et palagi et grandeça
tutte le fa abandonare.*

English translation**Italian (as sung)**

Stanza 7

To you, Lord, be commended
the soul that has passed over,
and may the blessed Virgin
present it before you.

*A te, signore, sia raccomandata
l'anima ch'è trapassata,
e la vergine beata
a te la deggia rapresentare.*