

Teaching material provided by



AMBROSE OF MILAN
Latin hymns

INTRODUCTION

As evidenced by the hymns and references to songs of praise contained in the New Testament, Christianity has expressed its faith through song since its inception. It also continued the tradition of psalm recitation. In the early days, the language of worship was Greek. However, Latin, which was predominant in the western Mediterranean region, gradually developed into another language through which the Christian faith could be expressed. Inspired by Greek church music in the eastern Mediterranean, Ambrose (339–97), the Bishop of Milan, started writing Latin hymns in the late fourth century. Fourteen of these hymns have been reliably preserved because they made a significant impact on their contemporaries and swiftly became an integral part of worship. All of his hymns have the same structure (eight stanzas of four lines each) and metre (acatalectic iambic dimeter), so they can all be sung to the same melody. However, we no longer know exactly what these songs sounded like around the year 400. The Church Father Augustine (354–430) describes the impression made on him by the hymn singing promoted by Ambrose:

“We were baptized [i.e. in the year 387 in Milan by Ambrose], and disquiet about our past life vanished from us. During those days I found an insatiable and amazing delight in considering the profundity of your [i.e., God’s] purpose for the salvation of the human race. How I wept during your hymns and songs! I was deeply moved by the music of the sweet chants of your Church. The sounds flowed into my ears and the truth was distilled into my heart. This caused the feelings of devotion to overflow. Tears ran, and it was good for me to have that experience. The Church at Milan had begun only a short time before to employ this method of mutual comfort and exhortation. The brothers used to sing together with both heart and voice in a state of high enthusiasm. Only a year or a little more had passed since Justina, mother of the young king Valentinian, was persecuting your servant Ambrose in the interest of her heresy. She had been led into error by the Arians. The devout congregation kept continual guard in the church, ready to die with their bishop, your servant. There my mother, your handmaid, was a leader in keeping anxious watch and lived in prayer. We were still cold, untouched by the warmth of your spirit, but were excited by the tension and disturbed atmosphere in the city. That was the time when the decision was taken to introduce hymns and psalms sung after the custom of the eastern Churches, to prevent the people from succumbing to depression and exhaustion. From that time to this day the practice has been retained and many, indeed almost all your flocks, in other parts of the world have imitated it.” (Augustine, *Confessions*, book 9, chapters 14–15, translation: Henry Chadwick).

Ambrose’s hymns may also have been sung at this occasion. In other parts of his work, Augustine quotes phrases or even entire verses from Ambrose’s hymns. For instance, following the death of his mother Monnica in 387, Augustine was unable to articulate his grief, suffering instead from “bitterness and sorrow” relating to both her death and his inability to mourn properly. He recounts how he overcame this crisis (*Conf.* 9.32, translation by Henry Chadwick), and in his account he combines the first verses of the morning and evening hymns (nos. 1 and 4 below):

“Finally, I fell asleep and on waking up found that in large part my suffering had been relieved. Alone upon my bed I remembered the very true verses of your Ambrose. For you are

Creator of all things.
You rule the heavens.
You clothe the day with light
And night with the grace of sleep.

So rest restores exhausted limbs
to the usefulness of work.
It lightens weary minds
And dissolves the causes of grief.”

The fourteen surviving hymns of Ambrose are printed in Latin below. The printed texts are based on critical editions, as indicated in each case. Brian P. Dunkle’s book *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan* (Oxford, 2016) provides an introduction to Ambrose’s hymn writing and an English translation of all the hymns. The edition by Fontaine, indicated below each Latin text, contains a French translation that closely follow the original.

1. Aeterne rerum conditor

Morning hymn

aeterne rerum conditor
noctem diemque qui regis
et temporum das tempora
ut alleues fastidium

adlevare – to lift up, to raise
fastidium, i – distaste, disgust, loathing

praeco diei iam sonat
noctis profundae peruigil
nocturna lux uiantibus
a nocte noctem segregans

praeco, onis – crier, herald
peruigil, ilis – ever wakeful, ever watchful

hoc excitatus lucifer
soluit polum caligine
hoc omnis errorum chorus
uias nocendi deserit

lucifer, eri – light bringer, morning star
polus, i – pole, dome of the sky, firmament

hoc nauta uires colligit
pontique mitescunt freta
hoc ipse petra ecclesiae
canente culpam diluit

nauta, ae – sailor, seaman
pontus, i – sea
mitescere – to become soft/mild
fretum, i – foaming water, shore-water, flood

surgamus ergo strenue
gallus iacentes excitat
et somnolentes increpat
gallus negantes arguit

strenuus, a, um – brisk, active, vigorous
gallus, i – cock
increpare – to exclaim loudly against, to rebuke

gallo canente spes redit
aegris salus refunditur
mucro latronis conditur
lapsis fides reuertitur

aeger, a, um – sick, troubled
mucro, onis – dagger, sword

Iesu, labantes respice
et nos uidendo corrige
Si respicis, lapsus cadunt
fletuque culpa soluitur

fletus, us – weeping, tears

tu lux refulge sensibus
mentisque somnum discute
te nostra uox primum sonet
et uota soluamus tibi

discutere – to break up, to shatter, to disperse

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 39;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 148–51

2. Splendor paternae gloriae

Christ the light

splendor paternae gloriae	splendor, ris – brightness, brilliance
de luce lucem proferens	proferre – to bring forward
lux lucis et fons luminis	
dies dierum illuminans	
uerusque sol, inlabere	inlabi – to slip into, to glide into, to fall into
micans nitore perpeti	micare – to quiver, to flicker, to sparkle
iubarque sancti spiritus	nitor, oris – brightness, glow
infunde nostris sensibus	perpes, etis – continuous, lasting
	iubar, aris – radiance, splendor, brightness
	infundere – to pour in
uotis uocemus et patrem	votum, i – solemn promise, vow, wish, prayer
patrem perennis gloriae	perennis, e – continuing (for one year), everlasting
patrem potentis gratiae	relegare – to remove, to send away
culpam releget lubricam	lubricus, a, um – slippery, smooth, uncertain
informet actus strenuos	informare – to give form, to shape
dentem retundat inuidi	strenuus, a, um – brisk, active, vigorous
casus secundet asperos	retundere – to hammer back, to blunt, to dull
donet gerendi gratiam	invidus, a, um – envious, grudging, jealous
	secundare – to direct favorably, to further
mentem gubernet et regat	calor, oris – warmth, heat
casto fideli corpore	fervere – to boil, to seethe, to steam
fides calore ferueat	fraus, fraudis – hurt, deception, detriment
fraudis uenena nesciat	venenum, i – drug, poison
Christusque nobis sit cibus	sobrius, a, um – sober, temperate, reasonable
potusque noster sit fides	ebrietas, tatis – drunkenness
laeti bibamus sobriam	
ebrietatem spiritus	
laetus dies hic transeat	pudor, oris – shame sense of honor, modesty
pudor sit ut diluculum	diluculum, i – daybreak, dawn
fides uelut meridies	meridies, ei – mid-day, noon
crepusculum mens nesciat	crepusculum, i – twilight, dusk of the evening

aurora cursus prouehit

aurora totus prodeat

in patre totus filius

et totus in uerbo pater

aurora, ae – dawn, daybreak

cursus, us – running, journey, course

prouehere – to move forwards, to carry forwards

prodire – to come forwards, to advance

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 40;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 184–87

3. Iam surgit hora tertia

Meditation of Christ's crucifixion in the third hour

iam surgit hora tertia qua Christus ascendit crucem nil insolens mens cogitet indendat affectum precis	nil = nihil insolens, ntis – contrary to custom, unusual, immoderate intendere – to stretch, to aim, to direct
qui corde Christum suscepit innoxium sensum gerit uotisque praestat sedulis sanctum mereri spiritum	suscepit – varia lectio: suscipit innoxius, a, um – harmless, innocent votum, i – solemn promise, vow, wish, prayer sedulus, a, um – diligent, industrious
haec hora, quae finem dedit diri ueterno criminis mortisque regnum diruit culpamque ab aeuo sustulit	dirus, a, um – fearful, awful, abominable veterus, i – old age, lethargy, sluggishness diruere – to pull to pieces, to demolish aeuum, i – lifetime, age, eternity
hinc iam beata tempora Christi coepere gratia fidei repleuit ueritas totum per orbem ecclesias	coepere = coeperunt
celsus triumphi uertice matri loquebatur suae en filius, mater, tuus, apostole, en mater tua	celsus, a, um – erect, prominent, elevated [varia lectio: celso] vertex, icis – whirl; pole of heavens; crown, top, summit
praetenta nuptae foedera alto docens mysterio ne uirginis partus sacer matris pudorem laederet	praetendere – to hold out, to place before nupta, ae – bride partus, us – bearing, birth pudor, ris – shame, sense of honor, modesty
cui fidem caelestibus Iesus dedit miraculis nec credit plebs impia qui credidit saluus erit	

nos credimus natum deum
partumque uirginis sacrae
peccata qui mundi tulit
ad dexteram sedens patris

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 41;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 210–13

4. Deus creator omnium

Evening hymn

deus creator omnium	polus, i – pole, dome of the sky, firmament
polique rector, uestiens	sopor, ris – (heavy) sleep
diem decoro lumine	
noctem soporis gratia	
artus solutos ut quies	artus, artuum – joints, limbs
reddat laboris usui	fessus, a, um – tired, exhausted
mentesque fessas alleuet	adlevare – to lift up, to raise
luctusque soluat anxios	luctus, us – sorrow, mourning, lamentation
grates peracto iam die	grates (f. pl.) – thanks, thanksgiving
et noctis exortu preces,	
uoti reos ut adiuues,	
hymnum canentes soluimus.	
te cordis ima concinant	imus, a, um – deepest, undermost
te uox canora concrepet	canorus, a, um – tuneful, melodious, harmonious
te diligat castus amor	concrepare – to rattle, to sound, to announce
te mens adoret sobria	
ut cum profunda clauserit	
diem caligo noctium	
fides tenebras nesciat	
et nox fide reluceat	
dormire mentem ne sinas	refrigerare – to cool again, to cool off
dormire culpa nouerit	vapor, ris – steam, vapour
castis fides refrigerans	temperare – to temper, to moderate
somni uaporem temperet	castus, a, um – pure, clean, chaste
exuta sensu lubrico	exuere – to put off, to strip off
te cordis alta somnient	lubricus, a, um – slippery, smooth
nec hostis inuidi dolo	somniare – to dream, to see in a dream
pauor quietos suscitet	

Christum rogamus et patrem

Christi patrisque spiritum

unum potens per omnia

foue precantes trinitas

fouere – to keep warm, to foster, to encourage (varia
lectio: faue)

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 42;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 236–39

5. Intende qui regis Israel

Christmas hymn

intende qui regis Israel super cherubim qui sedes appare Ephraem coram excita potentiam tuam et ueni	intendere – to stretch, to aim, to direct coram – (preposition + ablative) before, in the presence of; (adverb) in person, openly, publicly excitare – to wake up, to rise up, to arouse
ueni redemptor gentium ostende partum uirginis miretur omne saeculum talis decet partus deo	gens, gentis – tribe, folk, nation, people, pagans partus, us – bearing, birth deceat – it is becoming, it is proper
non ex uirili semine sed mystico spiramine uerbum dei factum est caro fructusque uentris floruit	uirilis, is – male, masculine, manly spiramen, minis – vent, blowing caro, carnis – flesh
alvus tumescit uirginis claustrum pudoris permanet uexilla uirtutum micant uersatur in templo deus	alvus, i – belly, stomach, womb tumescere – to swell claustrum, i – bolt, lock, enclosure, blockade pudor, ris – shame sense of honor, modesty vexillum, i – military ensign, standard, flag micare – to quiver, to flicker, to sparkle
procedat e thalamo suo pudoris aula regia geminae gigas substantiae alacris ut currat uiam	thalamus, i – women's room, marriage bed, wedlock aula, ae – court gigas, antis – giant alacer, cris, cre – lively, spirited, cheerful
egressus eius a patre regressus eius ad patrem excursus usque ad inferos recursus ad sedem dei	
aequalis aeterno patri carnis tropheo cingere infirmi nostri corporis uirtute firmans perpeti	tropaeum, i – trophy, symbol of victory cingere – to gird, to encircle perpetuus, etis – continuous, lasting

praesepe iam fulget tuum
lumenque nulla nox nouum
quod nulla nox interpolet
fideque iugi luceat

praesepe, is – stable, crib, manger
interpolare – to interrupt, to interpose, to falsify
iugis, e – continual, perennial

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 43;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 272–75

6. Amore Christi nobilis

Hymn on the apostle John

amore Christi nobilis et filius tonitrui arcana Iohannes dei fatu reuelauit sacro	tonitrus, us – thunder arcanus, a, um – secret, hidden fatu (abl. sg.) – in the telling
 captis solebat piscibus patris senectam pascere turbante dum natat salo immobilis fide stetit	 senecta, ae – old age pascere – to feed, to nourish natate – to swim, to float, to fluctuate (variae lectiones: nutat, nautat) salum, i – sea
hamum profundo merserat piscatus est uerbum dei iactauit undis retia uitam leuauit omnium	hamus, i – hook mergere – to plunge, to immerse piscari – to fish undam ae – water, wave rete, is – net
piscis bonus pia est fides mundi supernatans salo subnixa Christi pectore sancto locuta spiritu	subnixus, a, um – supported from beneath, leaning on pectus, toris – breast
in principio erat uerbum et uerbum erat apud deum et deus erat uerbum hoc erat in principio apud deum	
omnia per ipsum facta sunt se laudet ipse se sonet et laureatus spiritu scriptis coronetur suis	laureatus, a, um – crowned with laurel
commune multis passio cruorque delictum lauans hoc morte praestat martyrum quod fecit esse martyres	cruor, is – gore, blood (from a wound)

uinctus tamen ab impiis
calente oliuo dicitur
tersisse mundi puluerem
stetisse uictor aemuli

uincire – to bind
calere – to be hot, to glow with heat
tergere – to wipe off, to clean
aemulus, a, um – striving to equal, rivalling

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 44;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 312–15

7. Inluminans altissimus

Wonder-working Jesus

inluminans altissimus	micare – to quiver, to flicker, to sparkle
micantium astrorum globos	astrum, i – star
pax uita lumen ueritas	globus, i – ball, sphere, globe
Iesu faue precantibus	fauere – to be favorable, to favor, to support
seu mystico baptisate	flunta, orum – flow, flood, stream
fluenta Iordanis retro	sacrare – to consecrate, to hallow
conuersa quondam tertio	
praesenti sacraris die	
seu stella partum uirginis	partus, us – bearing, birth
caelo micans signaueris	(signaueris – varia lectio: signauerit)
et hoc adoratum die	(adoratum – supine I + object)
praesepe magos duxeris	praesepe, is – stable, crib, manger
	(duxeris – varia lectio: duxerit)
uel hydriis plenis aquae	Hydrium, i – water-pot, jug
uini saporem infuderis	sapor, ris – taste, flavor
hausit minister conscius	
quod ipse non impleuerat	
aquas colorari uidens	inebriare – to make drunk, to saturate
inebriare flumina	stupere – to be bewildered, to be amazed
mutata elementa stupent	(stupent – varia lectio: stupet)
transire in usus alteros	
sic quinque milibus uirum	(diuidit – varia lectio: diuidis)
dum quinque panes diuidit	
edentium sub dentibus	
in ore crescebat cibus	
multiplicabatur magis	dispendium, i – expense, cost, loss
dispendio panis suo	iugis, e – continual, perennial
quis haec uidens mirabitur	meatus, us – going, motion, course
iuges meatus fontium	

inter manus frangentium
panis rigatur profluus
intacta quae non fregerant
fragmenta subrepunt uiris

rigare – to wet, to moisten, to water
profluus, a, um – flowing onwards
subrepere – to creep up to, to slip under

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 45;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 344–47

8. Agnes beatae uirginis

To Saint Agnes, the Roman virgin martyr
who died during the Diocletian Persecution in 304 AD

Agnes beatae uirginis	(dies) natalis – birthday
natalis est quo spiritum	refundere – to pour back, to cause to overflow
caelo refudit debitum	sacratus, a, um – consecrated, holy
pio sacrata sanguine	
matura martyrio fuit	maturus, a, um – ripe, mature
matura nondum nuptiis	nuptiae, arum – marriage, wedding
nutabat in uiris fides	nutare – to nod repeatedly, to bid by a nod, to waver
cedebat et fessus senex	cedere – to go away, to withdraw
	fessus, a, um – tired, exhausted (et fessus – varia lectio: effessus)
metu parentes territi	metus, us – fear, anxiety
claustrum pudoris auxerant	terrere – to frighten, to terrify
soluit fores custodiae	claustrum, i – bolt, lock, enclosure, blockade
fides teneri nescia	pudor, oris – shame, sense of honor, modesty
	augere – to enlarge, to increase
	fores, um – (double) door, gate
	custodia, ae – guard, place of confinement
	tenere – to hold, to keep
	nescius, a, um – not knowing, ignorant, unaware
prodire quis nuptum putet	prodire – to come forwards, to advance
sic laeta uultu ducitur	nubere – to marry (nuptum: supine I)
nouas uiro ferens opes	vultus, us – countenance, features, looks, expression
dotata censu sanguinis	dotare – to endow
	census, us – rating of property, property, wealth
aras nefandi numinis	ara, ae – altar
adolere taedis cogitur	nefandus, a, um – abominable
respondet haud tales faces	numen, inis – nod, consent, will; divine power, divinity
sumpsere Christi uirgines	adolere – to magnify, to pile up on the altar, to burn a sacrifice
	taeda, ae – torch
	fax, facis – torch, light
hic ignis exstinguit fidem	exstinguere – to put out, to extinguish
haec flamma lumen eripit	eripere – to snatch, to take away
hic hic ferite ut profluo	ferire – to strike, to hit, to slay
cruore restinguam focos	profluus, a, um – flowing forth
	cruor, ris – gore, blood (from a wound)
	restinguere – to quench, to extinguish
	focus, i – fireplace, hearth

percussa quam pompa tulit
nam ueste se totam tegens
curam pudoris praestitit
ne quis relectam cerneret

in morte uiuebat pudor
uultumque texerat manu
terram genu flexo petit
lapsu uerecundo cadens

percutere – to strike, to cut through, to kill
pompa, ae – solemn procession, display (varia lectio:
pompam)
vestis, is – garment, clothing
tegere – to cover
praestare – to stand out, to show
retegere – to uncover, to open
tegere – to cover
genu, us – knee
flectere – to bend, to curve
uerecundus, a, um – shy, modest, demure

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 46;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 376–79

9. Hic est dies uerus dei

Good Friday hymn

hic est dies uerus dei sancto serenus lumine quo diluit sanguis sacer probrosa mundi crimina	serenus, a, um – clear, bright diluere – to wash asunder, to solve, to dissolve probrosus, a, um – defaming, scandalous
fidem refundens perditis caecosque uisu inluminans quem non graui soluat metu latronis absolutio	
qui praemio mutans crucem Iesum breui adquisit fide iustosque praeuio gradu praeuenit in regnum Dei	adquisit = adquisivit → adquirere praeuius, a, um – going before, leading the way
opus stupent et angeli poenam uidentes corporis Christoque adhaerentem reum uitam beatam carpere	stupere – to be bewildered, to be amazed at carpere – to pluck, to gather, to take
mysterium mirabile ut abluat mundi luem peccata tollat omnium carnis uitia mundans caro	lues, is – contagious disease, spreading evil
quid hoc potest sublimius ut culpa quaerat gratiam metumque soluat caritas reddatque mors uitam nouam	hoc – ablative of comparison (add “esse”)
hamum sibi mors deuoret suisque se nodis liget moriatur uita omnium resurgat uita omnium	hamus, i – hook resurgat uita omnium – varia lectio: resurgat ut uita omnium nodus, i – knot, band, bond

cum mors per omnes transeat
omnes resurgant mortui
consumpta mors ictu suo
perisse se solam gemat

ictus, us – blow, stroke, wound
gemare – to sigh, to groan

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 47;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 414–17

10. Victor Nabor Felix pii

To three martyrs of Milan

Victor Nabor Felix pii	Victor, Nabor, Felix – Christian martyrs executed in Milan in 303/304
Mediolani martyres	Mediolanum – Milan
solo hospites mauri genus	solum, i – bottom, ground, floor
terrisque nostris aduenae	maurus, a, um – Moorish, African aduenae, ae – newcomer, foreigner, alien
torrens harena quos dedit	torrere – to roast, to burn
anhela solis aestibus	harena, ae – sand
extrema terrae finium	anhelus, a, um – panting, puffing, causing one to pant
exulque nostri nominis	aestus, us – flaring heat, glow, boiling, seething, surf exsul, ulis – a banished person, exile
suscepit hospites Padus	Padus – river Po
mercede magna sanguinis	merces, edis – pay, salary, fee, cost
sancto repleuit spiritu	almus, a, um – nourishing, live-giving
almae fides ecclesiae	
et se coronauit trium	crucior, is – gore, blood (from a wound)
cruore sacro martyrum	castra, orum – military camp
castrisque raptos impiis	sacrare – to consecrate, to hallow
Christo sacrauit milites	
profecit ad fidem labor	proficere – to advance, to be beneficial
armisque docti bellicis	deceat – it is seemly, it is becoming, it is proper
pro rege uitam ponere	
decere pro Christo pati	
non tela quaerunt ferrea	telum, i – missile, arrow, spear
non arma Christi milites	
munitus armis ambulat	
ueram fidem qui possidet	
scutum uiro sua est fides	scutum, i – shield
et mors triumphus quem inuidens	invidere – to envy, to begrudge
nobis tyrannus ad oppidum	Laus Nova – Lodi
Laudense misit martyres	

sed reddiderunt hostias
rapti quadrigis corpora
reuerti in ora principum
plaustris triumphalis modo

quadrigae, arum – chariot
reuehere – to carry back
ora, ae (orum, i) – boundary-line, border, edge
plaustrum, i – wagon, cart

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 48;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 454–57

11. Grates tibi Iesu nouas

To the Milanese martyrs Protasius and Gervasius

grates tibi Iesu nouas	grates (f. pl., only nom./acc.) – thanks, thanksgiving
noui repertor muneris	repertor, is – discoverer
Protasio Geruasio	munus, eris – service, office, favour, gift
martyribus inuentis cano	
piaae latebant hostiae	latere – to lie hid, to escape notice
sed non latebat fons sacer	hostia, ae – victim, sacrifice
latere sanguis non potest	
qui clamat ad deum patrem	
caelo refulgens gratia	refulgere – to flash back, to reflect a light
artus reuelauit sacros	artus, uum – joints, limbs
nequimus esse martyres	nequire – not to be able to, to be unable
sed repperimus martyres	
hic quis requirat testium	requirere – to seek, to ask for, to require
uoces ubi factum est fides	impos, tis – not master, without control
sanatus impos mentium	
opus fatetur martyrur	
caecus recepto lumine	caecus, a, um – blind
mortis sacrae meritum probat	
Seuerus est nomen uiro	
usus minister publici	
ut martyrur uestem attingit	attingere – to touch, to handle
et ora tersit nubila	ora, ae (orum, i) – boundary-line, border, edge
lumen refulsit ilico	tergere – to clean, to cleanse
fugitque pulsa caecitas	nubilus, a, um – cloudy, becloudet
	ilex, icis – holm-oak, evergreen oak
	pellere – to move, to drive, to push
soluta turba uinculis	solvere – to loosen, to free, to release
spiris draconum libera	vinculum, i – band, bond, chain
emissa totis urbibus	spira, ae – coil, fold, spire
domum redit cum gratia	draco, onis – serpent, dragon
	emittere – to let go forth, to send forth, to release

uetusta saecla uidimus
iactata semicinctia
tactuque et umbra corporum
aegris salutem redditam

saeculum = saeculum
iactare – to throw, to toss away
semicingere – to gird halfway, to surround halfway

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 49;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 492–95

12. Apostolorum passio

On the martyrdom of the apostles

apostolorum passio diem sacrauit saeculi Petri triumphum nobilem Pauli coronam praeferens	praeferre – to bear before, to show, to prefer
coniunxit aequales uiros cruor triumphalis necis deum secutos praesulem Christi coronauit fides	cruor, is – gore, blood (from a wound) nex, necis – death praesul, ulis – president, head
primus Petrus apostolus nec Paulus impar gratia electionis uas sacrae Petri adaequauit fidem	impar, imparis – not equal, not matching vas, vasis – vessel, dish
uerso crucis uestigio Simon honorem dans deo suspensus ascendit dati non immemor oraculi	vestigium, i – footstep, track, foot suspendere – to hang immemor, is – unmindful, forgetful
praecinctus ut dictum est senex et eleuatus ab altero quo nollet iuit sed uolens mortem subegit asperam	praecingere – to gird, to surround subigere – to work up from below, to move under
hinc Roma celsum uerticem deuotionis extulit fundata tali sanguine et uate tanto nobilis	celsus, a, um – erect, prominent, elevated vertex, icis – top, summit efferre – to carry out, to bring forth vates, is – foreteller, soothsayer
taetae per urbis ambitum stipata tendunt agmina trinīs celebratur uis festum sacrorum martyrum	ambitus, us – a going round, circuit stipare – to crowd, to press together tendere – to stretch, to spread, to strain agmen, inis – movement, crowd, troop trinus, a, um – three in a group, triple

prodire quis mundum putet

concurrere plebem poli

electa gentium caput

sedes magistri gentium

quis = aliquis

prodire – to go forwards, to come forth

polus, i – pole, dome of the sky, firmament

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 50;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 522–25

13. Apostolorum supparem

The martyrdom of archdeacon Lawrence

apostolorum supparem	suppar, is – nearly equal
Laurentium archidiaconum	
pari corona martyrum	
Romana sacrauit fides	
Xystum sequens hic martyrem	vates, is – foreteller, soothsayer
responsa uatis rettulit	maerere – to be sad, to mourn, to grieve
maerere fili desine	
sequere me post triduum	
nec territus poenae metu	obtutus, us – close looking at, gaze
heres futurus sanguinis	persolueret – varia lectio: persoluerat
spectauit obtutu pio	
quod ipse mox persolueret	
iam tunc in illo martyre	syngrapha, ae – written agreement to pay, promissory note, bond
egit triumphum martyris	
successor aequus syngrapham	
uocis tenens et sanguinis	
post triduum iussus tamen	census, us – wealth, property
census sacratos prodere	spondere – to promise solemnly, to pledge oneself, to vow
spondet pie nec abnuat	abnuere – to refuse, to decline
addens dolum uictoriae	dolus, i – artifice, trickery, ruse
spectaculum pulcherrimum	egenus, a, um – in want of, destitute of, poor
egena cogit agmina	agmen, inis – movement, crowd, troop
inopesque monstrans praedicat	inops, inopis – needy, poor
hi sunt opes ecclesiae	opes, opum – resources, wealth
ueras piorum perpetes	perpes, itis – continuous, lasting
inopes profecto sunt opes	avarus, a, um – greedy
auarus inlusus dolet	illudere – to mock, to deceive
flammas et ultrices parat	ultrix, ultricis – avenging, vengeful

fugit perustus carnifex
suisque cedit ignibus
uersate me martyr uocat
uorate si coctum est iubet

perurere – to burn up, to consume
carnifex, icis – executioner, hangman
vorare – to eat greedily, to devour
coquere – to cook

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 51;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 560–63

14. Aeterna Christi munera

Praise of martyrdom

aeterna Christi munera
et martyrum uictorias
laudes ferentes debitas
laetis canamus mentibus

ecclesiarum principes
belli triumphales duces
caelestis aulae milites
et uera mundi lumina

terrore uicto saeculi
poenisque spretis corporis
mortis sacrae compendio
lucem beatam possident

spernere – to reject, to spurn
compendium, i – short cut, direct way

traduntur igni martyres
et bestiarum dentibus
armata saeuit ungulis
tortoris insani manus

ungula, ae – claw, hoof
saevire – to be furious, to be violent
tortor, tortoris – torturer
insanus, a, um – mad, insane, raving

nudata pendent uiscera
sanguis sacratus funditur
sed permanent immobiles
uitae perennis gratia

nudare – to make naked, to uncover, to expose
viscera, um – internal organs, entrails, bowels

deuota sanctorum fides
inuicta spes credentium
perfecta Christi caritas
mundi triumphat principem

in his paterna gloria
in his uoluntas spiritus
exultat in his filius
caelum repletur gaudio

te nunc redemptor quaesumus

ut martyrum consortia

iungas precantes seruuolos

in sempiterna saecula

quaesere (= quaerere) – to seek, to beg

consors, tis – having a common lot, partaking in common with

Edition: Hymni latini antiquissimi LXXV. Psalmi III, ed. Walther Bulst, Heidelberg 1956, 52;
Ambroise de Milan, Hymnes, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Paris 1992, 596–99