

Bowing Heads, Now
(*Tantum Ergo*)
by
Franz Schubert

SATB with Accompaniment
Maundy Thursday, Corpus Christi, Eucharistic Services

This luminous anthem by Franz Schubert (1797–1828) sets the final two verses of the six-verse Eucharistic hymn *Pange Lingua Gloriosi*, attributed to Thomas Aquinas (c1225–1274).

Tantum Ergo with its original Latin text is available in several published editions. Here I have provided Schubert's musical setting with an English translation.

Each of the lyric's two verses consists of six lines. The meter of the Latin is trochaic tetrameter catalectic: poetic lines consisting of four long stresses, each followed by a short, except that lines 2, 4, and 6 lack the final short stress. I have preserved this metrical pattern in English.

The Latin of *Tantum Ergo* is wondrously succinct, and I have tried to preserve this quality also. As a result my English translation is stricter than most that I have seen.

I have been able to follow these two principles—preserving in English both the Latin's metrical pattern and its succinctness—only at some expense to rhyme. The poetic power of Latin declension, with its freeing up of word placement, allows the ending word of each line to rhyme: 1 with 3 and 5, and 2 with 4 and 6. As English lacks Latin's freedom of word placement and I lack Aquinas's poetic powers, I have found myself limited to rhyming lines 2 and 4 and 6 of each verse.

Schubert wrote *Tantum Ergo* for SATB chorus accompanied by orchestra. Here I have used the transcription for keyboard accompaniment prepared by the assiduous editor of Schubert's music, Max Friedlaender (1852–1934).

Schubert's original specifies a solo quartet of voices for measures 1–8 and 19–22, with full choir singing the remainder of the piece. With small choirs in mind, I have omitted the solo specifications from this score.

Albert Blackwell
November 18, 2012

Tantum Ergo

Tantum ergo sacramentum

Veneremur cernui,

Et antiquum documentum

Novo cedat ritui,

Praestet fides supplementum

Sensuum defectui.

Bowing heads, now let us honor

This our sacrament divine,

Ancient promises fulfilling

As we take the bread and wine,

Faith bestowing satisfaction

Where deficient sense declines.

Genitori, Genitoque,

Laus et jubilatio,

Salus, honor, virtus quoque

Sit et benedictio,

Procedenti ab utroque

Compar sit laudatio.

To Creator, to Begotten,

Glory, praise, and honor be,

Joy and blessing everlasting,

Power to save eternally,

And to One from both proceeding,

Spirit in equality.

Bowing Heads, Now

(*Tantum Ergo*)

Latin hymn, att. Thomas Aquinas (1225?–1274)
Translated by Albert Blackwell

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Andante sostenuto
pp

Soprano
Alto

1. Bow - ing heads, now let us hon - or
2. To Cre - a - tor, to Be - got - ten,

Tenor
Bass

Andante sostenuto
pp

Acc.

3

This our sa - cra - ment di - vine,
Glo - ry, praise, and hon - or be,

This our sa - cra - ment di - vine,
Glo - ry, praise, and ho - nor be,

3

5

An - cient prom - is - es ful - fill - ing
Joy and bless - ing ev - er - last - ing,

5

fp

7

As _____ we take the bread and wine.
Power _____ to save e - ter - nal - ly.

As we take, we take the bread and wine.
Power to save, to save e - ter - nal - ly.

7

mf

9 *mf*

Bow - ing heads, now let us
To Cre - a - tor, to Be -

mf

9 *mf*

mf

11 *mf*

ho - nor This our sac - ra -
got - ten, Glo - ry, praise and

mf

11 *mf*

This our sac - ra -
Glo - ry, praise and

fz

mf

13

ment di-vine, An - cient prom - is - es ful -
hon - or be, Joy and bless - ing ev - er -

ment di-vine,
hon - or be,

15

fill - ing As we take, we take the
last - ing, Power to save, to save e -

f

fz

f

17

bread and wine.
ter - nal - ly,

17

p *decresc.*

19

p

Faith be - stow - ing Faith sa - tis - fac - tion
And to One from both pro - ceed - ing,

p

19

pp

6

Where de - fi - cient sense de - clines.

Spi - rit in e - qual i - ty.

21

Musical notation for the first system, including vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a soprano clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef. The music features a melodic line with some grace notes and a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

21

Musical notation for the second system, including piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment continues from the first system, featuring a complex texture with multiple voices and some grace notes.

23

p

Faith be - stow - ing sa - tis - fac - tion
And to One from both pro - ceed - ing,

cresc.

Musical notation for the third system, including vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a soprano clef. The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef. The music features a melodic line with some grace notes and a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. A *cresc.* marking is present above the vocal line.

cresc.

23

p

Musical notation for the fourth system, including piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment continues from the third system, featuring a complex texture with multiple voices and some grace notes. A *p* marking is present at the beginning of the system, and a *cresc.* marking is present above the piano line.

cresc.

Where _____ de - fi - cient sense _____ de-clines,
Spi - - - rit in e - qual - i - ty,

25 *f*

f Where _____ de - fi - cient sense de - clines,
Spi - rit in e - qual - i - ty,

27 *fz*

Where de - fi - cient sense de - clines.
Spi - rit in e - qual - i - ty.

fz

decresc.

29 *pp* >

Bow - ing heads, now, Bow - ing heads, now
 To Cre - a - tor, To Cre - a - tor,

29 *pp* >

31 >

let us hon - or, This our sa - cra - ment di - vine.
 to Be - got - ten, Glo - ry, praise, and hon - or be.

31 >

Performance suggestion: As singing both verses requires some seven minutes, one verse or the other might provide an anthem of more suitable length for a worship service. Each verse stands well alone, the first being a meditation on the Eucharist, the second a benediction addressed to the Trinity.