



LENT AND HOLY WEEK

VEXILLA REGIS — THE ROYAL BANNERS FORWARD GO

Saint Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530-c. 609)

The hymn of the Cross for Passiontide, written for a relic of the True Cross in 569



LATIN

Vexilla Regis prodeunt:
Fulget Crucis mysterium,
Qua Vita mortem pertulit,
Et morte vitam protulit.

Quae, vulnerata lanceae
Mucrone diro, crinum
Ut nos lavaret sordibus,
Manavit unda et sanguine.

Impleta sunt quae concinit
David fideli carmine,
Dicendo nationibus:
Regnavit a ligno Deus.

Arbor decora et fulgida,
Ornata Regis purpura,
Electa digno stipite
Tam sancta membra tangere.

ENGLISH

Abroad the regal banners fly,
now shines the Cross's mystery:
upon it Life did death endure,
and yet by death did life procure.

Who, wounded with a direful spear,
did purposely to wash us clear
from stain of sin, pour out a flood
of precious water mixed with blood.

That which the prophet-king of old
hath in mysterious verse foretold,
is now accomplished, whilst we see
God ruling the nations from a Tree.

O lovely and refulgent Tree,
adorned with purpled majesty;
culled from a worthy stock, to bear
those limbs which sanctified were.

Beata, cujus brachiis
Pretium pendit saeculi,
Statera facta corporis,
Tulitque praedam tartari.

O Crux, ave, spes unica,
Hoc Passionis tempore
Piis adauge gratiam,
Reisque dele crimina.

Te, fons salutis, Trinitas,
Collaudet omnis spiritus:
Quibus Crucis victoriam
Largiris, adde praemium. Amen.

Blest Tree, whose happy branches bore
the wealth that did the world restore;
the beam that did that Body weigh
which raised up Hell's expected prey.

Hail Cross, of hopes the most sublime!
Now, in the mournful Passion time,
grant to the just increase of grace,
and every sinner's crimes efface.

Blest Trinity, salvation's spring,
may every soul thy praises sing;
to those thou grantest conquest by
the holy Cross, rewards supply. Amen.

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