


Marche Pontificale

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23 September 2017

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1 Introduction

The *Pontifical Anthem and March* (Italian: *Inno e Marcia Pontificale*), also known as the *Papal Anthem*, is the [anthem](#) played to mark the presence of the [Pope](#) or one of his representatives, such as a [nuncio](#), and on other solemn occasions [1]. When the [Vatican’s flag](#) is ceremonially raised, only the first eight [bars](#) are played [2].

While the Papal Anthem also serves as the [national anthem](#) of the [Holy See](#) and the [Vatican City State](#), the Vatican stresses that it “is not to be understood as a national anthem”; it is a composition whose words and music “speak to the heart of many throughout the world who see in [Rome](#) the [See of Peter](#)” [1].

1.1 History

The music was composed in 1869 by [Charles Gounod](#), for the celebration on April 11, 1869 of [Pope Pius IX](#)’s golden jubilee of priestly ordination. The purely instrumental piece in three parts (see [3]), originally called *Marche pontificale* ([French](#) for “Pontifical March”), became extremely popular from its first performance [1] [2].

On October 16, 1949, [Pope Pius XII](#) declared it the papal anthem, replacing [Viktorin Hallmayer](#)’s *Marcia trionfale* (1857), which, being still the papal anthem when the Vatican City State was founded in 1929, had been treated also as the new state’s anthem. Gounod’s *Marche Pontificale* was first performed in this new role during a ceremony on [Christmas Eve](#) of 1949, one day before the opening of the [Holy Year](#) 1950. The old anthem too was played for a last time, almost as a token of respect [1].

At that time, [Antonio Allegra](#) (1905–1969), who was then one of the organists of [St. Peter’s Basilica](#), wrote [Italian](#) lyrics for Gounod’s music [4]. Other lyrics have been composed for the music in various

languages and by different authors [4]. Some of these versions are not directly related to the papacy, e.g. [Rudy Villanueva](#)'s [Cebuano](#) prayer, [Yutang Tabonon](#) ("Beloved Land"), for protection for the [Philippine](#) nation. In 1991, [Raffaello Lavagna](#) of [Savona](#) (born 1918) wrote [Latin](#) lyrics for a four-voice choir, on an arrangement by [Alberico Vitalini](#) [3].

1.2 Italian lyrics by [Allegra](#) (1949)

Original Italian

Roma immortale di Martiri e di Santi,
Roma immortale accogli i nostri canti:
Gloria nei cieli a Dio nostro Signore,
Pace ai Fedeli, di Cristo nell'amore.

A Te veniamo, Angelico Pastore,
In Te vediamo il mite Redentore,
Erede Santo di vera e santa Fede;
Conforto e vanto a chi combatte e crede,

Non prevarranno la forza ed il terrore,
Ma regneranno la Verità, l'Amore.

An English translation

O Rome immortal of Martyrs and Saints,
O immortal Rome, accept our praises:
Glory in the heavens to God our Lord,
And peace to men who love Christ!

To You we come, Angelic Pastor,
In You we see the gentle Redeemer,
The Holy Heir of true and holy Faith;
Comfort and refuge of those who believe and fight.

Force and terror will not prevail,
But Truth and Love will reign.



Figure 1: St Peter's Square, Vatican City - April 2007. (Photo by David Iliff. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0 . Courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#).)

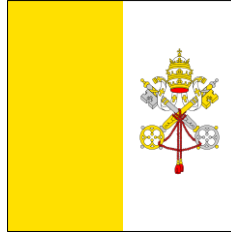



Figure 2: Flag of the Vatican City. (Author unknown. License: Public Domain . Courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#))

1.3 Latin lyrics by [Lavagna \(1991\)](#)

Original Latin

CHORUS

O felix Roma, O felix Roma nobilis.
 O felix Roma, Roma felix Roma nobilis.
 Sedes es Petri, qui Christi vicem gerit,
 Sedes es Petri, qui apostolus est pacis.

Pontifex tecum erimus omnes nos

Pontifex es magister qui tuos confirmas
 fratres.

Pontifex tecum erimus omnes nos

Pontifex es magister qui tuos confirmas
 fratres.

Pontifex fundamentum ac robur nostrum,
 Hominumque piscator pastor es gregis ligans
 terram et coelum.

Petre, tu es Christi es Vicarius super terram,

Rupes inter fluctus, tu es pharus ac veritas.

Tu Christi es caritas, tu es unitatis custos,

Promptus libertatis defensor; in te auctori-
 tas.

Petre, tu es Christi es Vicarius super terram,

Rupes inter fluctus, tu es pharus ac veritas.

Tu Christi es caritas, tu es unitatis custos,

Promptus libertatis defensor; in te auctori-
 tas.

An English translation

CHOIR

O happy Rome , O happy Rome, the most
 famous.

O happy Rome, Roma felix noble Rome.

You are the seat of Peter, who takes the
 place of Christ,

You are the seat of Peter, who is an apostle
 of peace.

Pope will be with us all

Are the teacher of the Pope who, you con-
 firm your brethren.

Pope will be with us all

Are the teacher of the Pope who, you con-
 firm your brethren.

And the strength of the foundation of our
 high priest,

The shepherd of the flock, linking heaven
 and earth and fisher of men.

Peter, you are the vicar of Christ on the earth,

Amidst the waves, you are a beacon, and the
 truth.

You are the love, you are the guardian of
 unity,

Prompt defender of liberty; authority in you.

Peter, you are the vicar of Christ on the
 earth,

Amidst the waves, you are a beacon, and the
 truth.

You are the love, you are the guardian of
 unity,

Prompt defender of liberty; authority in you.

1.4 See also

- [Index of Vatican City-related articles](#)

1.5 References

- [1]^{[a](#),[b](#),[c](#),[d](#)} [Pontifical Anthem and its History](#). From the official site of Vatican City State. Accessed on 2017-09-17.
- [2]^{[a](#),[b](#)} [Pontifical Anthem and its History](#) (in Italian). From the official site of Vatican City State. Accessed on 2017-09-17.
- [3]^{[a](#),[b](#)} [Score for choir of four voices by Alberico Vitalini with original Latin text by Monsignor Raffaello Lavagna](#). From the official site of the Holy See. Accessed on 2017-09-17.
- [4]^{[a](#),[b](#),[c](#),[d](#)} [Inno Pontificio](#) lyrics, with brief historical notes and MIDI file. From the official site of the Holy See. Accessed on 2017-09-17.

1.6 Media

[PDF](#), info [here](#)

1.7 External links

- [Official site of Vatican City State](#)
- [Streaming audio, lyrics and information about the Pontifical Anthem](#)

1.8 License

This work, *Marche Pontificale*, by J.L.A. Uro includes text from the [Wikipedia: Pontifical Anthem](#) article and, as the text of that article, is distributed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

1.9 Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the [International Music Score Library Project \(IMSLP\)](#) for making available the the public domain scores for *Marche Pontificale (1870)* and *Marche Pontificale (1924)*. My sincerest gratitude to Chris Walshaw et al. for the [ABC music notation](#); Jean-Francois Moine for [abcm2ps](#); Guido Gonzato for the [ABC Plus Project](#) and the [abcmidi](#) resources available there, more especially for the ABC resource book *Making Music with ABC 2*; James R. Allwright and Seymour Shlien for [abcmidi](#) source and binaries; Nils Liberg for [EasyABC](#); John MacFarlane for [pandoc](#) (used for converting `mediawiki` to `latex`); [Artifex, Inc.](#) for Ghostscript v.9.06 (includes the `ps2pdf` converter); [Inkscape v.0.48.5](#) for the tool for converting SVGs to PDFs for inclusion into \LaTeX documents; and [User:Martin H](#) for his [reply](#) to a TeX/LaTeX Stack Exchange question on including SVGs into \LaTeX documents. Many thanks, too, to the [Debian Project](#) for the Debian 8 (Jessie) GNU/Linux OS, [TeXLive](#) for providing the \TeX distribution, and [GitHub](#) for its generosity in providing space for [the project](#).

2 Musical Score: *Marche Pontificale (1869)*

As most of the versions of the *Marche Pontificale* mentioned above are currently still copyrighted, the musical score that follows is from two musical scores (*Marche Pontificale (1870)* and *Marche Pontificale (1924)*) that were obtained from the [International Music Score Library Project \(IMSLP\)](#). These two (2) arrangements were based on the original 1869 work of Charles Gounoud.

Marche Pontificale

Charles Gounod

Allegretto maestoso ♩ = 100

The musical score for "Marche Pontificale" by Charles Gounod is presented in a grand staff format, consisting of a piano (right) and bass (left) staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked "Allegretto maestoso" with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The score is divided into six systems, each with four measures. The first three systems begin with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a crescendo (*cresc.*) and decrescendo (*dim.*) marking. The fifth system also begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The score concludes with a double bar line.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Marche Pontificale". The score is written for piano and voice. It consists of six systems of music. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the vocal line with the lyrics "cre - - - scen -". The second system features a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes the vocal line with the lyrics "- do". The third system is marked *ff* (fortissimo). The fourth system is also marked *ff*. The fifth system is marked *ff*. The sixth system includes a first ending (marked 1) and a second ending (marked 2). The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C).

For audio (midi): [MarchePontificale.mid](#)