

OCP Choral Series

O God of Past and Present

Assembly, SATB Choir, and Organ

Genevieve Glen, OSB

Michael Joncas
ANCIENT PROMISE 76 76 76

INTRO *Strong and joyful* (♩ = ca. 80)

Organ

mf

f

6

VERSO All

mf

mp

O God of past and pres - ent, And

mp

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11

1. all that yet will be, Come, lis-ten to your peo - ple Who groan to be set

16

1. free. Come, lis-ten to your peo - ple Who groan to be set

20

1. free.

VERSE 2
(Assembly, Men only *ad lib.*)

Tenor *mf* 24

Bass (Melody) 2. Keep now the an-cient prom - ise That fans the stead-fast flame Of

28

2. hope that burns a - mong_ us Who call up - on your name, The

32

2. hope that burns a - mong_ us Who call up your name. _____

VERSE 3
(Assembly, Women only *ad lib.*)

37

Soprano *mf*
Alto

3. Let cit - ies see the out - break Of danc - ing in the

mf
mp
mp

42

3. street — When all the lost are gath - ered And all the part - ed

mp

46

3. meet, When all the lost — are — ath - ed And all — the part - ed —

mp

VERSE 4: All

50

3. meet. _____

Tenor/Bass (Melody) *mf*

4. Let

mf

mp

54

Soprano *mf*

Alto

4. Let moun-tains ring with laugh And for-ests clap their

4. moun - tains ring with laugh - ter And for ets clap their hands To

mp

58

4. hands, Sing - ing, sing - ing In long - a - ban - doned lands,
4. hear the sound of sing - ing In long - a - ban - doned lands, To

This block contains the musical notation for measures 58 through 61. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a bass line, and a piano accompaniment with treble and bass staves. The music is in a key with two flats and a 4/4 time signature. A large, bold, black watermark 'SAMPLE' is overlaid on the score.

62

4. Sing - ing, sing - ing In long - a - ban - doned lands. _____
4. hear the sound of sing - ing In long - a - ban - doned lands. _____

This block contains the musical notation for measures 62 through 65. It continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment from the previous section. The time signature changes to 3/4 for the final two measures. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present. A large, bold, black watermark 'SAMPLE' is overlaid on the score.

VERSE 5: Choir alone, *ad lib.*

67

Soprano *mp*
5. Mer - cy, mer - cy Through ev - 'ry

Alto (Melody) *mf*
5. Let mer - cy run riv - ers Through ev - 'ry des - ert

Tenor *mp*
5. Mer - cy, mer - cy Through ev - 'ry

Bass

72

5. soul And heal all spir - its make bro - ken whole, And

5. soul And heal all bar - ren spir - its And the bro - ken whole, And

5. soul And heal all spir - its And make the bro - ken whole, And

77

5. heal all spir - its, make the bro - ken

5. heal all bar - ren spir - its And make the bro - ken whole.

5. heal all spir - its, make the bro - ken

81

5. whole.

5. —

5. whole.

mf

f

VERSE 6: All

87

S *f*

A

6. Let na - tions all re - vere_ you, O

T *f*

B

92

6. God, show forth your pow'r: For all who love and serve_ you Let

(Melody)

96

6. For all who serve you Let heav - en's

(Melody)

6. heav - en's jus-tice flow'r! — For all who love and serve_ you Let heav - en's

6. heav - en's jus-tice flow'r! — For all who serve you Let heav - en's

6. jus - tice flow'r! 101

6. jus - tice_ flow'r! Let heav - en's jus - tice_ flow'r! —

ff

ff

f

Composer Notes

Circumstances of Composition: Having completed “We Gather Here to Worship” in early April 2007, I began a search for a comparable text that could be used as a general recessional hymn at Mass. At the suggestion of Randall DeBruyn, I explored the hymn texts of Benedictine Sister Genevieve Glen, as found in various collections published by OCP. “O God of Past and Present,” from *The Listening Heart* (OCP 20140), especially struck my imagination. Although the suggested use for this text is the season of Advent, I could easily hear it as a final prayer by the assembly, sung as their final act of corporate worship at the Eucharist. I was especially drawn to the hope-filled images of the lost being gathered, the parched meeting, barren spirits healed, and the broken made whole: Sister Genevieve’s text extends themes found in “We Gather Here to Worship,” especially in verses one and three.

Textual Issues: Sister Genevieve helpfully provides scriptural references and commentary on her text in *The Listening Heart* (p. 75):

Verse 1: Romans 8:18–23; Verse 3: Jeremiah 31:13; Verse 4: Isaiah 55:12; Verse 5: cf. Isaiah 35:6; Verse 6: cf. Isaiah 45:8

Paul expresses our longing for redemption eloquently: we and all creation are groaning to be set free (verse 1). Through prophets and in the psalms, God promises salvation in vivid images of the joy all creation will show when the Savior comes to free us (verses 3–5): peoples will dance, mountains will sing, trees will clap their hands, and the desert will be filled with the sound of running water. In place of separation, silence, and brokenness, “barren spirits” will flower upon the earth (verses 3–6). This hymn is an acclamation of hope, and of trust that our hope will be answered.

Musical Issues: Benedictine Father Tobias C. provides a lovely hymn tune, DIEU ÉTERNEL, for Sister Genevieve’s text (*The Listening Heart*, p. 75). In contrast to the strong pulses of his 4/4 D major setting, I wanted to create a more lyric and dance-like tune without losing an appropriate sense of reverence. I have named this hymn tune ANCIENNE PROMISE and it carries the metrical structure 76 76 76. Because Sister Genevieve’s text carries the metrical structure 76 76, I double the last two lines in each verse, necessitating a change in the third line of verse two from “Of hope that burns among us” to “The hope that burns among us,” treated as an appositive phrase to “the steadfast flame.” I also wanted the piece to demonstrate affinities with “We Gather Here to Worship” without being a slavish imitation. Thus “O God of Past and Present” employs the same keys (E♭ major to F major), compositional strategies, and sonorities as “We Gather Here to Worship,” but where the opening processional employs duple meter with only glancing dissonances in the accompaniment and voice-leading, the recessional is almost completely in triple meter and reveals added second chords and rocking syncopations in the accompaniment. The assembly may sing all the verses, or, to offer contrast in sonorities, the full assembly could sing verses one, four and six; the men of the assembly could sing verse two, the women verse three, and the choir verse five.

Pastoral Issues: I intend this setting to be used primarily as a concluding recessional hymn at Eucharist, sung after the dismissal of the assembly. While the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* does not prescribe any music after the dismissal, “The Mass is ended. Go in peace. / Thanks be to God,” neither does it forbid vocal or recessional music, and in many locales singing a concluding hymn has become customary. This hymn could also be sung after Communion has been completed as noted in *GIRM* (88), as a plea for the fruits of Communion to be actualized. Sister Genevieve indicates that this text, with its longing for the fulfillment of God’s covenant promised to his people, is appropriate for Advent (and thus also for the last Sundays of the Church year with their eschatological themes). I could also see it effectively used in catechumenal meetings, for the scrutinies of the elect in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, in services of reconciliation and the anointing of the sick, and in prayer services entreating justice and peace in the world.

—Michael Joncas

O God of Past and Present

Assembly Edition

O GOD OF PAST AND PRESENT

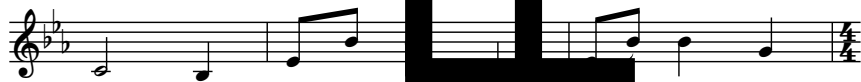
Michael Joncas



1. O God of past and pres - ent And all that yet will
 2. Keep now the an - cient prom - ise That means the stead - fast
 3. Let cit - ies see the glo - ry Of anc - ing in the
 4. Let moun - tains ring with praise For - ests clap their
 5. Let mer - cy run in riv - ers Through ev - 'ry des - ert
 6. Let na - tions all re - vere you, O God, show forth your



1. be, Come, lis - ten to your groan to be set
 2. flame Of hope that burns a - mong us who call up - on your
 3. street When all the lost are gath - ered And all the part - ed
 4. hands, To hear the sound of sing - ing In long - a - ban - doned
 5. soul And heal all bar - ren spir - its, And make the bro - ken
 6. pow'r: For all who love and serve you Let heav - en's jus - tice



1. free. Come, lis - ten to your peo - ple Who
 2. name, The hope that burns a - mong us Who
 3. meet, When all the lost are gath - ered And
 4. lands, To hear the sound of sing - ing In
 5. whole, And heal all bar - ren spir - its, And
 6. flow'r! For all who love and serve you Let



1. groan to be set
 2. call up - on your name.
 3. all the part - ed meet.
 4. long - a - ban - doned lands.
 5. make the bro - ken whole.
 6. heav - en's jus - tice flow'r!

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