

# HOLY GOD, HOLY AND MIGHTY

Trisagion, ca. 5th century

Colin Mawby

*Slow and solemn*

Alto *p* Ho - ly God Ho - ly and Might - y.

Tenor *p* Ho - ly God, Ho - ly,

Organ *pp* no Ped.

5 S *pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have *mf* mer - cy up - on us, *pp*

A *pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have *mf* mer - cy up - on us, *pp*

T *pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have *mf* mer - cy up - on us, *pp*

B *pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have *mf* mer - cy up - on us, *pp*

Ped.

9

*pp* mer - cy.

*p* mer - cy up - s, *pp* mer - cy.

*pp* mer - cy.

*pp* mer - cy.

*p*

*pp*

**W E**

13

*p* Ho - ly and Might - y,

*p* Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and Might - y,

*p* Ho - ly, Ho - ly Might - y,

*p*

**M A S**

17

Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

21

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly.

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly.

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly.

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly.

Ped.

25

*p* Ho - ly God, *mp* Ho - ly and Might - y,  
*p* Ho - ly God, *mp* Ho - ly and Might - y,  
*p* Ho - ly God, *mp* and Might - y,

*p*

29

*pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, *ff* Have mer - cy up - on us, *p*  
*pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, *ff* Have mer - cy up - on us, *p*  
*pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, *ff* Have mer - cy up - on us, *p*  
*pp* Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, *ff* Have mer - cy up - on us, *p*

*pp*

Ped.

33

mer - cy up - on us, mer - cy up - on us,  
 mer - cy up - on us, mer - cy  
 mer - cy up - on us

no Ped.

37

mer - cy, mer - cy. long  
 mer - cy, mer - cy. long  
 mer - cy, mer - cy. long  
 mer - cy, mer - cy. long

Ped.

## COMPOSER NOTES

The origins of this text, called the *Trisagion* or three times holy, are lost to history. Most hymnals attribute it as a Greek 5th century composition. It was certainly known by the time of the council of Calcedon in A.D. 451; early on it became part of many Eastern liturgies. It is an expansion of two places in the Scriptures (Isaiah 8:6 and Revelation 4:8) where angels acclaim God as holy, holy, holy. In the hymn each of the holies are expanded upon; they also build one upon the other. While the first phrases praise God for being holy and then holy and strong, the final phrase of the hymn praises God by use of an apophysis, that is praising God by denying what God is not—in this case mortal. This is a common way of praising God in the Eastern tradition: God is unknowable, unsearchable, and so on.

The text also has a strong history in the West, above all in the Gallican liturgies. But even in Rome to this day, the hymn is a part of the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Here it is used as part of the singing during the veneration of the cross. To use this hymn at this moment speaks volumes; as we venerate the altar of the cross of Christ, commemorating the death of Jesus, we are still acclaiming the immortality of God. Jesus surely died as both God and flesh, but not mortal; but even still, Jesus is God: holy, strong and immortal who will never die.

This piece needs to be sung with a sense of drama, complete conviction and considerable dynamic range. Let the text dictate the performance—it is very ancient and very sacred.

—Colin Mawby

S  
A  
M  
E