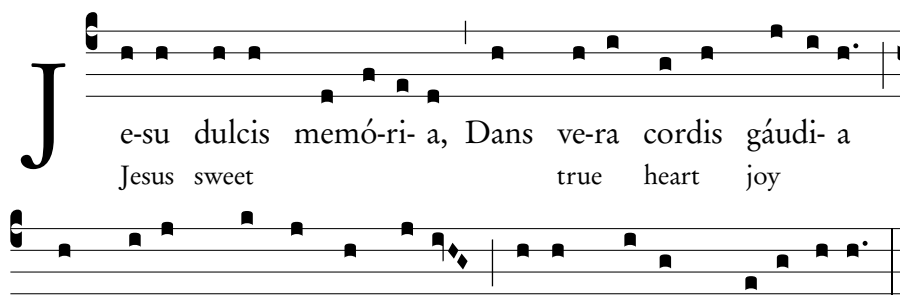


Jesu dulcis memoria

Jesu dulcis memoria is attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153). There are around 42–53 verses depending on the manuscript. The Church uses the poem for the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. She divides it into three parts, Jesu dulcis memoria, Jesu Rex admirabilis and Jesu decus angelicum, for Vespers, Matins and Lauds respectively.



The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff begins with a large, decorative initial 'J' on the left. The notes are represented by small black squares on a five-line staff. The second staff continues the melody. Below the first staff, the Latin text is written in a Gothic-style font. Below the second staff, the English translation is provided in a modern sans-serif font.

J e-su dulcis memó-ri- a, Dans ve-ra cordis gáudi- a
Jesus sweet true heart joy

Sed super mel et ómni- a, E-jus dulcis praesénti- a.
but over all His sweet presence

Many are hesitant to try reading the traditional notation above. Not many schools teach how to read it so it remains a stumbling block. A straight translation into modern notation is a little tricky as the whole concept of timing is quite different between the two, but here's my uneducated take on the task. This is how it sounds to me.



Je - su dulcis memori - a Dans ve - ra cordis gaudi - a Sed



super mel et omni - a E - jus dulcis praesen - ti - a

Translations

Fr. Edward Caswall (1814–1887) has translated many hymns. He is associated with the Oxford Movement along with Cardinal Newman and Mgr. Ronald Knox.

Hymn for Vespers

Vespers is sung as the day closes and everyone comes together to prepare the evening meal and make a welcoming place for people to find rest after a long day's work.

IESU, dulcis memoria,
dans vera cordis gaudia,
sed super mel et omnia,
eius dulcis praesentia.

JESU, the very thought of Thee,
with sweetness fills my breast,
but sweeter far Thy face to see,
and in Thy presence rest.

Nil canitur suavius,
nil auditur iucundius,
nil cogitatur dulcius,
quam Iesus Dei Filius.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can
frame,
nor can the memory find
a sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,
o Savior of mankind!

Iesu, spes paenitentibus,
quam pius es petentibus!
quam bonus te quaerentibus!
sed quid invenientibus?

Nec lingua valet dicere,
nec littera exprimere:
expertus potest credere,
quid sit Iesum diligere.

Sis, Iesu, nostrum gaudium,
qui es futurus praemium:
sit nostra in te gloria,
per cuncta semper saecula.
Amen.

O hope of every contrite heart
o joy of all the meek,
to those who fall, how kind Thou art!
how good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah this
nor tongue nor pen can show:
the love of Jesus, what it is
none but His loved ones know.

Jesu, our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize wilt be:
Jesu, be Thou our glory now,
And through eternity. Amen.

Hymn for Matins

Matins is sometimes called Vigils. It is said in the middle of the night or thereabouts. The name comes from the word for morning.

IESU, Rex admirabilis
et triumphator nobilis,
dulcedo ineffabilis,
totus desiderabilis.

O JESUS, King most wonderful!
Thou Conqueror renowned!
Thou Sweetness most ineffable!
in whom all joys are found!

Quando cor nostrum visitas,
tunc lucet ei veritas,
mundi vilescit vanitas,
et intus fervet caritas.

When once Thou visitest the heart,
then truth begins to shine;
then earthly vanities depart;
then kindles love divine.

Iesu, dulcedo cordium,
fons vivus, lumen mentium,
excedens omne gaudium
et omne desiderium.

O Jesu! Light of all below!
Thou font of life and fire!
surpassing all the joys we know,
and all we can desire.

Iesum omnes agnoscite,
amorem eius poscite;
Iesum ardentem quaerite,
quaerendo inardescite.

May every heart confess Thy name,
and ever Thee adore;
and seeking Thee, itself inflame
to seek Thee more and more.

Te nostra, Iesu, vox sonet,
nostri te mores expriment;
te corda nostra diligant
et nunc, et in perpetuum.
Amen.

Thee may our tongues for ever bless;
Thee may we love alone;
and ever in our lives express
the image of Thine own. Amen.

Hymn for Lauds

Lauds is sung at daybreak, rising in the dark, greeting the first light of dawn with prayer and praises.

IESU, decus angelicum,
in aure dulce canticum,
in ore mel mirificum,
in corde nectar caelicum.

O JESUS, Thou the beauty art
of Angel worlds above!
Thy name is music to the heart,
enchancing it with love!

Qui te gustant, esuriunt,
qui bibunt, adhuc sitiunt;
desiderare nesciunt,
nisi Iesum, quem diligunt.

Celestial sweetness unalloyed!
who eat Thee hunger still,
who drink of Thee still feel a void
which naught but Thou canst fill!

O Iesu mi dulcissime,
spes suspirantis animae!
Te quaerunt piaae lacrimae,
Te clamor mentis intimae.

O my sweet Jesus! hear the sighs
which unto Thee I send!
to Thee my inmost spirit cries
my being's hope and end!

Mane nobiscum, Domine,
et nos illustra lumine;
Pulsa mentis caligine,

Stay with us, Lord, and with Thy
light
illumine the soul's abyss;

Mundum reple dulcedine. scatter the darkness of our night
and fill the world with bliss.

Iesu, flos Matris Virginis, O Jesu! spotless Virgin flower!
amor nostrae dulcedinis, our life and joy! to Thee
Tibi laus, honor nominis, be praise, beatitude and power,
regnum beatitudinis. Amen. through all eternity! Amen.

Thanks for those words go to Michael Martin and his Thesaurus
Precum Latinarum <http://www.preces-latinae.org>

Vernacular versions

Looking through hymnbooks its hard to find an authoritative tune
for the English version. Since there is no clear winner and there
are three sets of words, I'll take this opportunity to present three
different arrangements.

The plainchant comes tantalisingly close to matching Fr. Caswall's
english. With a few slurred notes here's what we get.



Je - sus, the ve - ry thought of Thee With
No tongue can sing nor heart can frame nor
O hope of e - v'ry con - trite heart o
But what to those who find? Ah this nor
Je - su, our on - ly joy be Thou, As



sweet - ness fills my breast, But
can the mem - 'ry find a
joy of all the meek, to
tongue nor pen can show: the
Thou our prize wilt be: Je -

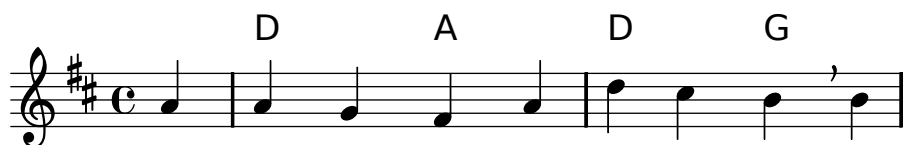


sweet - er far Thy face to see And
sweet - er sound than Thy blest Name O
those who fall, how kind Thou art! how
love of Je - sus, what it is none
su, be Thou our glo - ry now, And



in Thy pre - sence rest.
Sa - viour of man - kind.
good to those who seek!
but His loved ones know.
through e - ter - ni - ty.

Each hymnbook I looked at gave different tunes for the same words. Not one sounded familiar to me. Here is my favourite of the old tunes out of copyright. It is an English tune called Mendip.



O Je - sus, King most won - der - ful! Thou
When once Thou vi - si - test the heart, then
O Je - su! Light of all be - low! Thou
May e - v'ry heart con - fess Thy name, and
Thee may our tongues for e - ver bless; Thee



Con-que - ror re-nowned! Thou Sweet-ness most in -
truth be - gins to shine; then earth - ly va - ni -
font of life and fire! sur - pass - ing all the
e - ver Thee a - dore; and seek - ing Thee, it -
may we love a - lone; and e - ver in out



ef - fa - ble! in whom all joys are found!
ties de - part; then kin - dles love di - vine.
joys we know, and all we can de - sire.
self in - flame to seek Thee more and more.
lives ex - press the i - mage of Thine own.

There was another favourite tune called St. Botolph. It was in 3/4 time. I thought maybe I could make up my own tune, but after many

attempts came to realise I was attempting to reinvent the wheel. The tune that I was fishing for turned out to be a Christmas carol from a Maddy Prior album. The name is “This Endris Night” and it fits the meter of Fr. Caswall’s translation beautifully. The lilting melody goes well with the yearning of the text.

C G F C Am

O Je - sus, Thou the beau - ty art of An - gel
 Ce - les - tial sweet-ness un - al - loyed! who eat Thee
 O my sweet Je - sus! hear the sighs which un - to
 Stay with us, Lord, and with Thy light il - lume the
 O Je - su! spot - less Vir - gin flower! our life and

G Em F C F

6

worlds a - bove! Thy name is mu - sic to the
 hung-er still, who drink of Thee still feel a
 Thee I send! to Thee my in - most spi - rit
 soul's a - byss; scat - ter the dark-ness of our
 joy! to Thee be praise, be - a - ti - tude and

C F G C

12

heart, en - chant - ing it with love!
 void which naught but Thou canst fill!
 cries my be - ing's hope and end!
 night and fill the world with bliss.
 power, through all e - ter - ni - ty!

Jesu Rex admirabilis is famous in its polyphonic setting by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525?-1594)

Jesu! Rex admirabilis

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

SAB

G. P. da Palestrina

Je - su! Rex ad - mi - ra - bi - lis et tri - um - phator no - bi -
Ma - ne no - biscum Do - mi - ne et nos il - lus - tra lu - mi -

Je - su! Rex ad - mi - ra - bi - lis et tri - um - phator no - bi -
Ma - ne no - biscum Do - mi - ne et nos il - lus - tra lu - mi -

Je - su! Rex ad - mi - ra - bi - lis et tri - um - phator no - bi -
Ma - ne no - biscum Do - mi - ne et nos il - lus - tra lu - mi -

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top two staves are for Soprano and Alto, and the bottom staff is for Bass. The music is in common time (C) and features a melodic line with some chromaticism, including a sharp sign on the final note of the second staff.

lis, dul - ce - do in - ef - fa - bi - lis, to -
ne pul - sa men - tis ca - li - gi - ne, mun -

lis, dul - ce - do in - ef - fa - bi - lis, to - tus de - si - de -
ne pul - sa men - tis ca - li - gi - ne, mundum re - ple dul -

lis, dul - ce - do in - ef - fa - bi - lis, to - tus de - si - de -
ne pul - sa men - tis ca - li - gi - ne, mundum re - ple dul -

The second system of the musical score continues the melody. It begins with a measure rest on the first staff, followed by a melodic line. The lyrics are split across three lines. The music is in common time and features a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in the second staff.

10

tus de - si - de - ra - bi - lis, to - tus de - si - de - ra - bi - lis.
dum re - ple dul - ce - di - ne, mun - dum re - ple dul - ce - di - ne.

ra - bi - lis, to - tus de - si - de - ra - bi - lis.
ce - di - ne, mun - dum re - ple dul - ce - di - ne.

ra - bi - lis, to - tus de - si - de - ra - bilis.
ce - di - ne, mun - dum re - ple dul - ce - dine.

O Jesus, King most wonderful!
Thou Conqueror renowned!
Thou Sweetness most ineffable!
in whom all joys are found!

Stay with us, Lord, and with Thy light
illumine the soul's abyss;
scatter the darkness of our night
and fill the world with bliss.

Translation into English by Fr. Edward Caswall (1814-1887)