

FIRST CATECHESIS
TODAY'S FAMILIES

“SON, WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO US?

BEHOLD, YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU ANXIOUSLY” (Lk 2:48)

The Good News through Music

Mary and Jesus receive family crises

The piece to listen to: **Pietro Mascagni, *Sancta Maria***

Keywords: concrete families, challenges, relationship

Introduction

How does sacred music speak about the crisis of families? Through a series of quotations. A piece designed for a certain theme, as in our case for an *Ave Maria*, is also used to describe another story. This one speaks about the betrayal of love. In this way, without many words, the symbolism of the sacred joins that of the profane, as if to say that Mary welcomes and takes upon herself the situations and sufferings of her children.

Listening Guide

Questions to facilitate the discussion of the piece

Did you like the piece you listened to?

Describe in three words the feelings that it aroused in you.

Have you already heard music like this before?

What instruments did you recognize?

Can you sing the melody?

What struck you most about this song and why?

Sancta Maria by Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945) refers us back to the wounds of human love that the Redeemer's mother made her own. Mary is a mother because she welcomes her children in any situation when they come to her; she is their friend and trustworthy confidant in difficult times. This is the symbolism that the musical motif connotes with its recurring repetitions. Sacred music lends itself here to enveloping, interpreting, and assuming the profane condition. The melody of *Sancta Maria* was, in fact, reused in the famous intermezzo of *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), at the center of love's betrayal that will lead to the death of Turiddu, the story's protagonist. He says that he wants Santuzza but, in reality, he is still in love with Lola. She has married another man, the carter Alfio, whom she does not really love, after Turiddu had to leave the country for military service. When Turiddu comes back, he comes to see her secretly but is discovered. The truth will strongly break out on Easter, when the drama is consummated in the deadly duel between Alfio and Turiddu that ends with the latter's death. The importance of the day on which the drama is concluded must not be overlooked, for it seems to say that the Paschal mystery assumes and encloses all the upheavals caused by human love.

The Lyrics

Ave, Maria, gratia plena,

Dominus tecum.

Benedicta tu in mulieribus,

*et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.
Sancta María, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.*

The Good News

This piece confronts us in a very special way with a theme that has been given ample space in the discussion of AL: the failure of marriages, crises which, in our times often and for various reasons, involve spouses. Hence, this makes necessary the example of how Jesus and Mary take charge of these situations to accompany people, welcoming them where they really are and not where they ideally should be. This implies a substantial change in a certain form of pastoral care, which must be aimed at inclusion and acceptance of each person because otherwise the concept of mercy will be emptied, as AL recalls (Nos. 296-297, 305-306).