MELLITUS' CHALLENGE

For Robin Ward on the occasion of his baptism at St Martin's Church Epsom, 30th September 2007.

Words by Nigel Williams, after Bede. Music by Helen Williams.



St Mellitus was the first bishop of London and became the third archbishop of Canterbury after Augustine and Laurence. King Sabert of the East Saxons became a Christian. When he died, he left his kingdom between three sons, who refused to be baptized. In 616 they demanded of Mellitus that he give them the bread that would offer them special protection. Mellitus told them that the bread was only special for those that accepted Christianity in baptism. Sadly, the sons were not convinced. Mellitus went briefly into exile, until archbishop Laurence converted king Eadbald of Kent and Mellitus was recalled. The story is told in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Book II. Mellitus' feast day is April 24th.

Here are the water and the bread of life. Refuse the water and you cannot be Fit to receive the consecrated bread That is the body of your saviour Jesus.

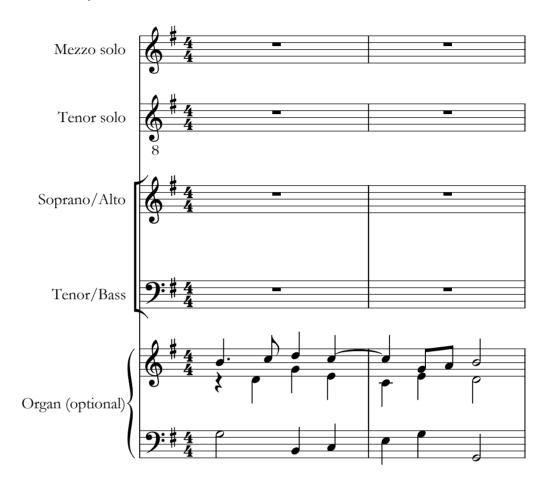
But if you will be washed in the water
That offered salvation to your father,
Yours too will be a share in the consecrated bread
That is the body of your saviour Jesus.

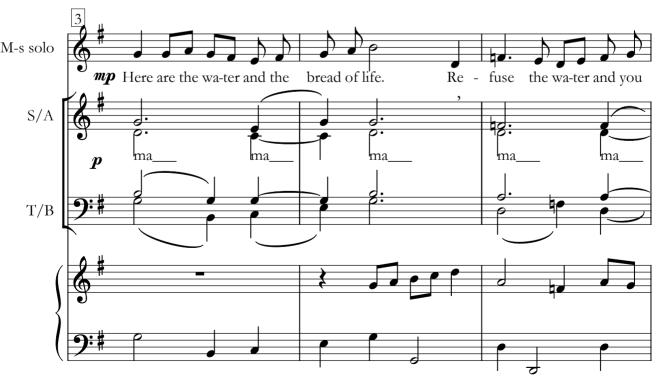
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^{* &}quot;d" should not verge towards "t".

