

NEW COLLEGE CHAPEL



Marian Meditations  
A Service for the Birth of the Virgin Mary  
8th September 2020

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ORDER OF SERVICE

*Ave Maria*

*Eustache du Caurroy (1549 – 1609)*

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;  
benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

From *Eustache du Caurroy: Requiem Mass & Motets*,  
CRD Records LTD, 1998

*Welcome & Introduction*

*The Revd Dr Erica Longfellow,  
Dean of Divinity*

*The Virgin's Complaint by Selma Derry (Poetry, March, 1925)*

*read by the Dean of Divinity*

Last night I dreamed I wore the virgin's shoes.  
They were patterned in supple kidskin,  
And were strangely sewn with thong;  
They were curiously worn and narrow—  
They had been mine so long.  
One was immaculate as a star,

One bore a quaint quick scar.

I wore them pridefully, these tender shoes;  
I wore them gracefully, without a care,  
Down a lost path jutting with naked stones.  
I wore them gracefully—I, unaware.

*There is no rose*

*Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)*

There is no rose of such vertu  
as is the rose that bare Jesu.  
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was  
Heaven and earth in litel space,  
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see  
there be one God in persons three,  
Pares forma.

The aungels sungen the shepherds to:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gaudeamus.

Leave we all this worldly mirth,  
and follow we this joyful birth.  
Transeamus.

from *A Ceremony of Carols*, CRD Records LTD, 1994

*The Annunciation, Luke. 26 – 38*

*read by Elizabeth Vincent,  
Christian Union Representative*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High,

and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.' <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

*Annunciation, by Nicola Slee*

*read by Esther Brazil,  
Ordinand*

It was not as it has long been pictured.  
I did not sit alone, in silken garbs, reading my book.  
There was no enclosed garden.  
Lilies did not grow in our hot Palestinian courtyards.

For a start, it was never quiet.  
People were always coming and going in the compound, fetching water  
ferrying animals or children  
hanging out the washing  
pounding corn  
or gathering gossip under the dark olive trees.  
And prayers were noisy, too.  
We intoned the Shema in unison, the whole gabble of us, whoever  
happened to be around at the time.  
Elders recited the scriptures while children grizzled  
and goats shuffled in their pens.  
Don't imagine me rapt in ecstasy or fingering a rosary:  
the prayers of Jewish girls are more pragmatic.

I was never alone, anyway.  
There was always somebody wanting something:  
'Miriam, help me make the bread.'  
'Miriam, clear that trestle.'  
'Miriam, fetch more water.'  
No angel wafted in on golden wings.  
Gabriel barged in, banging his bag down on the table.  
It was the only way he could get my attention above the din.  
At least a dozen pairs of eyes turned to look where he stood,  
dishevelled and dusty, shouting,

‘Miriam, there’s another job for you to do.’

*A spotless rose*

*by Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)*

A Spotless Rose is blowing,  
sprung from a tender root,  
of ancient seers’ foreshowing,  
of Jesse promised fruit;  
its fairest bud unfolds to light  
amid the cold, cold winter,  
and in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing,  
whereof Isaiah said,  
is from its sweet root springing  
in Mary, purest Maid;  
for through our God’s great love and might,  
the Blessed Babe she bare us  
in a cold, cold winter’s night.

*Text: Es its ein Ros entsprungen (trad.), transl. Catherine Winkworth  
from Herbert Howells: Choral Music II, CRD Records LTD, 1991*

*The Visitation, Luke 1. 39 – 56*

*read by Katie McKeogh,  
Cox Fellow*

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.’  
<sup>46</sup>And Mary said:

*Magnificat from the Service in G*

*C. V. Stanford (1852 – 1924)*

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is on them that fear him; throughout all generations.  
He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the  
imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from their seat; and hath exalted the  
humble and meek.  
He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent  
empty away.  
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel; as he  
promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.

from *Evensong at New College Oxford*, Novum, 2010

*Joseph, Matthew 1.18 – 25*

*read by Ros Temple, Tutor for Graduates*

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'<sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel',  
which means, 'God is with us.'<sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he  
did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his  
wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a  
son; and he named him Jesus.

*Hymne a la vierge*

*Pierre Villette (1926 – 1998)*

Ô toute belle Vierge Marie,  
Votre âme trouve en Dieu le parfait amour

Il vous revêt du manteau de la Grâce comme une fiancée  
Parée de ses joyaux.

Alléluia, alléluia. Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur,  
Car tu as pris soin de moi,  
Car tu m'as enveloppée du voile de l'innocence,  
Car tu m'as faite avant le jour,  
Car tu m'as fait précéder le jaillissement des sources.

Vous êtes née avant les collines  
Ô sagesse de Dieu, porte du Salut  
Heureux celui qui marche dans vos traces  
Qui apprête son cœur à la voix de vos conseils.

Avant les astres vous étiez présente  
Mère du Créateur au profond du ciel.  
Quand Dieu fixait les limites du monde  
Vous partagiez son cœur étant à l'œuvre avec lui.

*O beautiful Virgin Mary,  
in God your soul discovers perfect love.  
It cloaks you with the mantle of Grace like a betrothed  
adorned with her jewels.*

*Alleluia, alleluia. I will sing your praise, Lord,  
for you have looked after me,  
for you have covered me with the veil of innocence,  
for you have made me before the day,  
for you have made me go before the gushing of fountains.*

*You were born before the hills,  
O wisdom of God, the way to salvation.  
Happy is he who walks in your footsteps,  
who prepares his heart to listen to your advice.*

*You were present before the stars,  
Mother of the Creator, in the very depths of heaven.  
When God was creating the world,  
working with Him you shared His heart.*

*Text: Roland Bouhéret (1930 – 1995)  
from Poulenc & his French contemporaries, Avie Records, 2006*

*Sapientia, by Madeleine L'Engle*

*read by Hannah Barr,  
Ordinand*

It was from Joseph first I learned  
Of love. Like me he was dismayed.  
How easily he could have turned  
Me from his house; but, unafraid,  
He put me not away from him  
(O God-sent angel, pray for him).  
Thus through his love was Love obeyed.

The Child's first cry came like a bell:  
God's word aloud, God's word in deed.  
The angel spoke: so it befell,  
And Joseph with me in my need.  
Child whose father came from heaven,  
To you another gift was given,  
Your earthly father chosen well.

With Joseph I was always warmed  
And cherished. Even in the stable  
I knew that I would not be harmed.  
And, though above the angels swarmed,  
Man's love it was that made me able  
To bear God's love, wild, formidable,  
To bear God's will, through me performed.

*Josef lieber, Josef mein*

*Hieronymus Praetorius (1560 – 1629)*

Joseph Lieber Joseph mein  
hilf mir wiegen mein Kindelein,  
Gott, der wind dein Lohner sein  
im Himmelreich, der Jungfrau  
Kind Maria.

*Joseph, my dear Joseph,  
help me rock my little child.  
God will recompense you  
in heaven, the Virgin Mary's child.*

Eia, eia. Sause.  
Virgo Deum genuit,  
quem/quod divina voluit  
clementia.

*Hey, hey!  
The Virgin has given birth to God  
whom the divine mercy willed.*

Omnes nunc concinite,  
nato regi psallite,  
voce pia dicite:  
sit Gloria Christo nostro infantulo.

*Now let all sing together,  
sing to the newborn king,  
saying with devout voice,  
“Glory be to Christ our babe!”*

Hodie apparuit in Israel,  
quem praedixit Gabriel, est natus  
Rex.

*Today the one whom Gabriel predicted  
has appeared in Israel, has been born king.*

from *Carols for Christmas morning*, *The Gift of Music*, 2005

*Madonna Mary*, by *Ethel Romig Fuller* (Poetry, December 1928)

*read by Bethany Sollereeder,  
Research Fellow at the Laudato Si’ Research Institute*

Hair like shadows,  
Mouth a cherry,  
Sandal-shod  
Madonna Mary  
Wore God’s child—  
A white rose pressed,  
Petal and thorn,  
To her young breast.  
Miracle  
That angels hailed,  
That a wondering new star  
Trailed;  
Mystery  
Beyond the ken  
Of the Orient’s  
Three wise men. . . .  
Petal and thorn . . .  
A flower to toss  
From a mother’s arms  
To a cross . . . to a cross.

*Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*

*Claudio Monteverdi (1567 – 1643)*

Audi coelum, verba mea,  
plena desiderio et perfuse gaudio.

Dic, quaeso, mihi  
Quae est ista, quae consurgens  
ut aurora rutilat ut benedicam?  
Dic nam ista pulchra ut luna, electa  
ut sol, replet Laetitia  
terras, coelos, maria?  
Maria Virgo illa dulcis, praedicata de propheta Ezechiel  
porta Orientalis?  
Illa sacra et felix porta per quam mors fuit expulsa,  
introduxit autem vitam?  
Quae semper tutum est medium  
inter homines et Deum,  
pro culpis remedium.  
Omnes hanc ergo sequamur,  
qua cum gratia mereamur  
vitam aeternam consequamur.  
Praestet nobis Deus,  
Pater hoc et Filius, et mater  
cuius nomen invocamus dulce  
miseris solamen.  
Benedicta es, virgo Maria, in saeculorum saecula.

*Hear, o heaven, my words full of longing and suffused with joy.  
I beseech you,  
tell me who is she that rises up, bright as the dawn and I shall bless her.  
Say if this lady, lovely as the morn and glorious as the sun, fills with gladness  
the earth, heavens and seas.  
That sweet virgin Mary,  
foretold by the prophet Ezechiel, that eastern gate,  
that sacred and joyful portal through which death was expelled and life renewed;  
who is always a trusted mediator between God and man for the forgiveness of  
sins.  
Let us all therefore follow her, through whom we may with grace deserve to  
attain life everlasting.  
May God the Father,  
and the Son, and the mother whose sweet name we invoke, grant solace to the  
afflicted.  
Blessed art thou, virgin Mary, for ever and ever.*

from *Monteverdi: Vespro, Novum*, 2010

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' <sup>27</sup>Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

*Stabat mater*

*Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710 – 1736)*

Stabat mater dolorosa  
Iuxta crucem lacrimosa  
Dum pendebat filius.

*Stood the sorrowful mother  
weeping by the cross  
while her son hung there.*

from *Art of the Chorister*, Novum, 2011

*mary sequence, by Lucille Clifton*

*read by the Dean of Divinity*

a song of mary

somewhere it being yesterday.  
i a maiden in my mother's house.  
the animals silent outside.  
is morning.  
princes sitting on thrones in the east  
studying the incomprehensible heavens.  
joseph carving a table somewhere  
in another place.  
i watching my mother.  
i smiling an ordinary smile.

mary's dream

winged women was saying  
"full of grace" and like.  
was light beyond sun and words  
of a name and a blessing.  
winged women to only i.  
i joined them, whispering  
yes.

island mary

after the all been done and i  
one old creature carried on  
another creature's back, i wonder  
could i have fought these thing?  
surrounded by no son of mine save  
old men calling mother like in the tale  
the astrologer tell, i wonder  
could i have walk away when voices  
singing in my sleep? i one old woman.  
always i seem to worrying now for  
another young girl asleep  
in the plain evening.  
what song around her ear?  
what star still choosing?

*Ave Maria*

*Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548 – 1611)*

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;  
benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

from *Sancte Deus*, Warner Classics & Jazz, 2011