

NEW COLLEGE CHAPEL



Readings and Music for Lent

14th March 2021

5.45pm

**Readings from *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624), by John Donne (1572-1631),
adapted from the edition by Anthony Raspa (OUP, 1987)**

*Variable, and therefore miserable condition of Man;
this minute I was well, and am ill, this minute. (Meditation 1)*

Read by Professor Peter McCullough, Sohmer Fellow, Lincoln College

The choir and the clergy enter in procession.

The choir sings the Lent Prose:

*Hear us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:
for we have sinned against thee.*

To thee, redeemer, on thy throne of glory:
lift we our weeping eyes in holy pleadings:
listen, O Jesu, to our supplications.

Sins oft committed now we lay before thee
with true contrition, now no more we veil them:
grant us, redeemer, loving absolution.

10th century Mozarabic hymn

The Dean of Divinity introduces the service.

I. The first Alteration, the first Grudging, of the Sickness.

If I were but mere *dust* and *ashes*, I might speak unto the *Lord*, for the *Lord's* hand made me of this *dust*, and the *Lord's* hand shall recollect these *ashes*; the *Lord's* hand was the wheel, upon which this vessel of clay was framed, and the *Lord's* hand is the *Urn*, in which these *ashes* shall be preserved. I am the *dust*, and the *ashes* of the *Temple* of the Holy Ghost, and what marble is so precious? But I am more than *dust* and *ashes*: I am my best part, I am my *soul*.

II. The King sends his own physician.

Still when we return to that Meditation, that *Man is a World*, we find new *discoveries*. Let him be a *world*, and himself will be the *land*, and *misery* the *sea*. His misery (for misery is his, his own; of the happiness even of this world, he is but *tenant*, but of misery the freeholder; of happiness he is but the *farmer*, ... but of misery the *Lord*, the *proprietary*), his misery, as the *sea*, swells above all the hills, and reaches to the remotest parts of this earth, *Man*; who of himself is but *dust*, and coagulated and kneaded into earth, by *tears*; his *matter* is *earth*, his *form*, *misery*.

The choir sings a motet by Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500-1553):

Emendemus in melius quae ignoranter peccavimus; ne subito praeoccupati die mortis,
quaeramus spatium poenitentiae, et invenire non possimus.

Attende, Domine, et miserere; quia peccavimus tibi.

Memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.

Let us make amends for the sins we have committed in ignorance, lest we should suddenly, at the day of our death, seek a place of repentance and may not be able to find one. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against you.

Remember, mortal, that you are dust, and to dust will you return.

Responsory on Ash Wednesday

The Dean of Divinity introduces the third reading.

III. *The physicians use cordials, to keep the venom and malignity of the disease from the heart.*

My God, my God, all that thou askest of me is my Heart, My Son, give me thy heart. Am I thy son, as long as I have but my heart? ... Hast thou considered my Heart, that there is not so perverse a Heart upon earth; and wouldst thou have that, and shall I be thy son, thy eternal Son's Coheir, for giving that? The Heart is deceitful, above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? He that asks that question makes the answer, I the Lord search the Heart. When didst thou search mine? Dost thou think to find it, as thou madest it, in Adam? ... O God of all light, I know thou knowest all, and it is Thou that declarest unto man what is his Heart. Without thee, O sovereign Goodness, I could not know how ill my heart were. ... And I can gather out of thy Word, so good testimony of the hearts of men as to find ... Hearts that can, Hearts that have learned; ... straight hearts, no perverseness without; and clean hearts, no foulness within: such hearts I can find in thy Word; and if my heart were such a heart, I would give thee my Heart. But I find stony hearts too, and I have made mine such: I have found Hearts, that are snares; and I have conversed with such; hearts that burn like Ovens; and the fuel of Lust, and Envy, and Ambition, hath inflamed mine; ... What shall I do? Without that present I cannot be thy Son, and I have it not. ... There is then a middle kind of Hearts, not so perfect as to be given but that the very giving mends them; not so desperate as not to be accepted but that the very accepting dignifies them. This is a melting heart, and a troubled heart, and a wounded heart, and a broken heart, and a contrite heart; and by the powerful working of thy piercing Spirit such a Heart I have. Thy Samuel spoke unto all the house of thy Israel, and said, If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, prepare your hearts unto the Lord. If my heart be prepared, it is a returning heart. And if thou see it upon the way, thou wilt carry it home.

The choir sings a motet by Richard Dering (1580-1630):

O bone Jesu, O dulcis Jesu,
O Jesu fili Mariae Virginis,
plene misericordia et pietate.
O bone Jesu, O dulcis Jesu,
secundum magnam misericordiam tuam,
miserere mei.

*O good Jesus, O sweet Jesus,
O Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary,
full of loving kindness and compassion.
O good Jesus, O sweet Jesus,
according to your great loving kindness,
have mercy upon me.*

The Dean of Divinity introduces the fourth reading.

IV. From the bells of the church adjoining, I am daily remembered of my burial in the funerals of others.

Here the *Bells* can scarce solemnize the funeral of any person, but that I knew him, or knew that he was my *Neighbour*: we dwelt in houses near to one another before, but now he is gone into that house, into which I must follow him. ... And when these *Bells* tell me, that now one, and now another is buried, must not I acknowledge, that they have the *correction* due to me, and paid the *debt* that I owe? ... We scarce hear of any man *preferred*, but we think of ourselves that we might very well have been that *Man*; Why might not I have been that *Man*, that is carried to his *grave* now? Could I fit my self, to *stand*, or *sit* in any *Man's place*, and not to lie in any *man's grave*? I may lack much of the *good parts* of the meanest, but I lack nothing of the *mortality* of the weakest; they may have acquired better *abilities* than I, but I was born to as many *infirmities* as they.

The choir sings an anthem by Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625):

O Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not: neither chasten me in thy displeasure.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.
My soul is also sore troubled: but Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?
O save me for thy mercy's sake.

Psalm 6: 1-4

The Dean of Divinity introduces the fifth reading.

V. Now, this bell tolling softly far another, says to me: Thou must die.

Perchance he for whom this *Bell* tolls, may be so ill, as that he knows not it *tolls* for him; and perchance I may think myself so much better than I am, as that they who are about me, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that. ... When the church *baptizes a child*, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that *Head* which is my *Head* too, and ingrafted into that *body* whereof I am a *member*. And when she *buries a Man*, that action concerns me: all *mankind* is of one *Author*, and is one *volume*; when one *Man* dies, one *Chapter* is not *torn* out of the *book*, but *translated* into a better *language*; and every *Chapter* must be so translated; ... some pieces are translated by *Age*, some by *sickness*, some by *war*, some by *justice*; but *God's* hand is in every *translation*, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again, for that *Library* where every *book* shall lie open to one another. The *Bell* doth toll for him that *thinks* it doth; and though it *intermit* again, yet from that *minute*, that that occasion wrought upon him, he is united to *God*. ... Who bends not his *ear* to any *bell*, which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that *bell*, which is passing a *piece of himself* out of this *world*? No man is an *Island*, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the *Continent*, a part of the *main*; if a *Clod* be washed away by the *Sea*, *Europe* is the less, as well as if a *Promontory* were, as well as if a *Manor* of thy *friend's* or of *thine own* were; Any *Man's death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankind*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; it tolls for *thee*. ... Another man may be *sick* too, and sick to *death*, and this *affliction* may lie in his *bowels*, as *gold* in a *Mine*, and be of no use to him; but this *bell*, that tells me of his *affliction*, digs out, and applies that *gold* to *me*: if by this consideration of another's danger, I take mine own into *Contemplation*, and so secure myself, by making my recourse to my *God*, who is our only security.

The choir sings a motet by Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585):

In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.
Redemisti me Domine, Deus veritatis.

*Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.
You have redeemed me Lord, God of truth.*

Psalm 31: 5

The Dean of Divinity introduces the sixth reading.

VI

My God, my God, is this one of thy ways, of *drawing light out of darkness*, to make him for whom this bell tolls, now in this dimness of his sight, to become a *superintendent*, an *overseer*, a *Bishop*, to as many as hear his *voice*, in this bell, and to give us a *confirmation* in this action? Is this one of thy ways to *raise strength out of weakness*, to make him who cannot rise *from his bed*, nor stir *in his bed*, come *home to me*, and in this sound, give me the strength of *healthy* and *vigorous instructions*? ... I hear that which makes all sounds *music*, and all *music* perfect; I hear thy Son himself saying, *Let not your hearts be troubled*; only I hear this *change*, that whereas thy Son says there, *I go to prepare a place for you*, this man in this sound says, *I send to prepare you for a place, for a grave*. But, O my God, my God, since *heaven* is *glory* and *joy*, why do not *glorious* and *joyful* things lead us, induce us to heaven? ... Is the *glory* of *heaven* no perfecter in itself, but that it needs a *foil of depression* and *ingloriousness* in this *world*, to set it off? Is the *joy* of *heaven* no perfecter in itself, but that it needs the *sourness* of this *life* to give it a *taste*?

The Dean of Divinity introduces the seventh reading.

VII

I am bold, O Lord, to bend my *prayers* to thee for his *assistance*, the voice of whose bell hath called me to this *devotion*. Lay hold upon his *soul*, O God, till that *soul* have thoroughly considered his *account*; and how few *minutes* soever it have to remain in that *body*, let the power of thy *Spirit* recompense the shortness of time, and perfect his *account*, before he pass away: present his *sins* so to him, as that he may *know* what thou forgivest, and not doubt of thy *forgiveness*, let him *stop* upon the *infiniteness* of those sins, but *dwell* upon the *infiniteness* of thy *Mercy*; ... Breathe inward *comforts* to his *heart*, and afford him the power of giving such outward *testimonies* thereof, as all that are about him may derive comforts from thence, and have this *edification*, even in this *dissolution*, that though the *body* be going the way of all *flesh*, yet that *soul* is going the way of all *Saints*. ... O most blessed God, ... in his behalf, and in his name, hear thy Son crying to thee, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* and forsake him not; but with thy *left hand* lay his *body* in the *grave*..., and with thy *right hand* receive his *soul* into thy *Kingdom*, and unite *him* and *us* in one *Communion of Saints*. Amen.

The choir sings the hymn, to a melody by Johann Crüger (1598-1662):

Ah, holy Jesu, how hast thou offended,
That man to judge thee hath in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected,
O most afflicted.

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesu, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesu, I it was denied thee:
I crucified thee.

For me, kind Jesu, was thy incarnation,
Thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
Thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion,
For my salvation.

Therefore, kind Jesu, since I cannot pay thee,
I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee,
Think on thy pity and thy love unswerving,
Not my deserving.

*Johann Heermann (1585-1647), after an 11th-century Latin meditation;
translated by Robert Bridges (1844-1930)*

The Dean of Divinity introduces the eighth reading.

VIII. *The bell rings out, and tells me in him, that I am dead.*

The *Bell* rings out, the *pulse* thereof is changed; the *tolling* was a *faint* and *intermitting pulse*, upon one side; this *stronger*, and argues *more* and *better life*. His *soul* is gone out, and as a Man who had a lease of one thousand *years* after the expiration of a short one, or an *inheritance* after the *life* of a Man in a *Consumption*, he is now entered into the possession of his *better estate*. His *soul* is gone, *whither?* Who saw it *come in*, or who saw it *go out?* *Nobody*; yet everybody is sure he *had one*, and *hath none*. ... This *soul*, this *Bell* tells me is *gone out*; *Whither?* Who shall tell me that? I know not *who* it is, much less *what* he was; the condition of the Man, and the course of his life, which should tell me *whither* he is gone, I know not. I was not there, in his *sickness*, nor at his *death*; I saw not his *way*, nor his *end*, nor can ask them, who did, thereby to *conclude*, or *argue*, *whither* he is gone. But yet I have one nearer me than all these, mine own *Charity*; I ask that, and that tells me, *He is gone to everlasting rest*, and *joy*, and *glory*. I owe him a good *opinion*; it is but *thankful charity* in me, because I received *benefit* and *instruction* from him when his *Bell* tolled: and I, being made the fitter to *pray*, by that disposition, wherein I was assisted by his occasion, did *pray* for him; and I *pray* not without *faith*; so I do *charitably*, so I do *faithfully* believe, that

that *soul* is gone to everlasting *rest*, and *joy*, and *glory*. But for the *body*, how poor a wretched thing is *that*? we cannot express it *so fast*, as it grows *worse* and *worse*. That *body*, which scarce *three minutes* since was such a *house*, as that that *soul*, which made but one step from thence to *Heaven*, was scarce thoroughly content, to leave that for *Heaven*; that *body* hath lost the *name* of a *dwelling-house*, because none dwells in it, and is making haste to lose the name of a *body*, and dissolve to *putrefaction*. Who would not be affected, to see a clear and sweet *River* in the *Morning*, grow a *kennel* of muddy land water by *noon*, and condemned to the saltness of the *Sea* by *night*? And how lame a *Picture*, how faint a *representation* is that, of the precipitation of man's body to *dissolution*? Now all the parts built up, and knit by a lovely *soul*, now but a *statue* of *clay*, and now, these limbs melted off, as if that *clay* were but *snow*; and now, the whole *house* is but a *handful of sand*, so much *dust*, and but a *peck of Rubbish*, so much *bone*. If *he*, who, as this *Bell* tells me, is gone now, were some *excellent Artificer*, who comes to him for a *clock*, or for a *garment* now? or for *counsel*, if he were a *Lawyer*? if a *Magistrate*, for *justice*? ... In the womb of the earth, we *diminish*, and when she is *delivered* of us, our *grave* opened for another; we are not *transplanted*, but *transported*, our *dust* blown away with *profane dust*, with every wind.

The choir sings an anthem by Maurice Greene (1696-1755):

Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days,
that I may be certified how long I have to live.
Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in
respect of thee; And verily every man living is altogether vanity.
For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain;
he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.
And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in thee.
Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling;
hold not thy peace at my tears.
O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength,
before I go hence, and be no more seen.

Psalm 39: 5-8, 13, 15

The Dean of Divinity introduces the ninth reading.

IX

Eternal and most gracious *God*, I have a new occasion of *thanks*, and a new occasion of *prayer* to *thee*, from the *ringing* of this *bell*. Thou toldest me in the other *voice*, that I was *mortal* and approaching to *death*[.] ... Thou presentest me *death* as the *cure* of my *disease*, not as the *exaltation* of it; if I mistake thy voice herein, if I overrun thy pace, and prevent thy hand, and imagine *death* more instant upon me than thou hast bid him be, yet the voice belongs to me; *I am dead*, I was

born dead, and from the first laying of these *mud walls* in my *conception*, they have *mouldered* away, and the whole course of *life* is but an *active death*. Whether this *voice* instruct me that I am a *dead man now*, or *remember* me that I have been a *dead man* all this while, I humbly thank thee for speaking in this *voice* to my *soul*, and I humbly beseech thee also to accept my prayers in his behalf, by whose occasion this *voice*, this sound, is come to me. ... That therefore this *soul* now newly departed to thy *Kingdom*, may quickly return to a joyful *reunion* to that *body* which it hath left, and that *we* with *it* may soon enjoy the full *consummation* of all, in *body* and *soul*, I humbly beg at thy hand, O our most merciful *God*, for thy Son *Christ Jesus' sake*. ... That *time* may be swallowed up in *Eternity*, and *hope* swallowed in *possession*, and *ends* swallowed in *infiniteness*, and *all men* ordained to *salvation* in *body* and *soul*, be *one entire* and *everlasting sacrifice* to thee, where thou mayst receive *delight* from them, and they *glory* from thee, for evermore. Amen.

The choir sings one of the Songs of Farewell by C. H. H. Parry (1848-1918):

My soul, there is a country,
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry,
All skillful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious Friend
And (O my soul, awake!)
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave, then, thy foolish ranges;
For none can thee secure
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.

Peace
Henry Vaughan (1621-1695)

The Dean of Divinity says the closing prayer and blessing.

The choir and clergy depart in silence.