FESTAL EVENSONG
for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary
August 15 2020
Preparing for Worship

Today the Church celebrates the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the date which since the earliest Christian centuries has been kept in her honour. We give thanks for her response to God’s call and her trust in God’s promises, and we allow that faithfulness to point us to her Son Jesus.

Much of the music in this service comes from recordings made by the Cathedral Choir under the direction of Dr Stephen Darlington, of material from the Eton Choirbook of the early sixteenth century. This music is often long and complex, but rewards concentrated listening. It is music written to the glory of God; to display the skill of the composers, clerks and choristers of the late fifteenth century; and to lift the hearts and minds of those who listen, that we may experience through the glory of richly complex music something of the glory of God and the song of the angels. It is supplemented by other recordings, by the Cathedral Choir and Cathedral Singers, both from our archives and recorded more recently. The Officiant is the Revd Canon Sarah Foot, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History.

Entering into worship through audio broadcast is more familiar to some of us than to others. If this is new to you, try to actively share in the service, not just have it on in the background; and join in the words in bold. Find a comfortable position that helps you to pray, and to receive the love of God in your heart. As we listen, we are united in worship and prayer despite the distance between us.

You can find regular audio services, alongside other resources for worshipping at home, at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship. Please do get in touch with the cathedral if you would like us to pray for or support you. May God bless you as we worship him together.

The Eton Choirbook material, recorded between 2009 and 2017, is available as a series of five CDs on the Avie Records label.
Introit

Ave Maria, mater Dei, regina caeli, domina mundi, imperatrix inferni, miserere mei et totius populi Christiani; et ne permitas nos mortaliter peccare; sed tuam sanctissimam voluntatem adimplere. Amen.

Hail Mary, mother of God, queen of heaven, mistress of the world, empress of hell: have mercy on me and on all Christian people; and do not allow us to commit mortal sin but help us to fulfil your most holy will. Amen.

Words: anonymous Latin prayer
Music: William Cornysh (d. c.1502)

Sentence

Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.

Luke 1: 45

Canon Foot welcomes us and introduces the service.

The Opening Versicles and Responses
recorded by the Clerks of the Choir to a plainsong setting

Minister O Lord, open thou our lips and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
Choir

Minister O God, make speed to save us.
Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.

Minister Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
Choir as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Minister Praise ye the Lord.
Choir The Lord’s Name be praised.
I am a rose of Sharon,
    a lily of the valleys.
As a lily among brambles,
    so is my love among maidens.
As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,
    so is my beloved among young men.
With great delight I sat in his shadow,
    and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
    and his intention towards me was love.
Sustain me with raisins,
    refresh me with apples;
    for I am faint with love.
O that his left hand were under my head,
    and that his right hand embraced me!
I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
    by the gazelles or the wild does:
do not stir up or awaken love
    until it is ready!

Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum;
et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae;
etc
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est;
et sanctum nomen ejus.
Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies;
timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo;
Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede;
et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis;
et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel, puerum suum;
recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros;
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio,
et nunc, et semper:
et in Saecula saeculorum. Amen

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.

(Luke 1:46–55)

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.
When the disciples had come together, they asked Jesus, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.
Nunc Dimittis
recorded by the Clerks of the Choir
to a plainsong setting

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen:
thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared:
before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

(Luke 2:29–32)

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.
The Lesser Litany and Responses

Minister  The Lord be with you.
Choir    And with thy spirit.
Minister  Let us pray.
Choir    Lord, have mercy upon us.
        Christ, have mercy upon us.
        Lord, have mercy upon us.
Choir    Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.  Amen.
Minister  O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
Choir    And grant us thy salvation.
Minister  O Lord, save the Queen.
Choir    And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.
Minister  Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
Choir    And make thy chosen people joyful.
Minister  O Lord, save thy people.
Choir    And bless thine inheritance.
Minister  Give peace in our time, O Lord.
Choir    Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
        but only thou, O God.
Minister  O God, make clean our hearts within us.
Choir    And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.
The Collect of the Day

Grant, O almighty God, that as thou, looking upon the lowliness of thy handmaiden Mary ever blessed, didst honour her in choosing her to be the mother of thine only Son: So look upon our lowliness and infirmities with thine infinite goodness and mercy, that we may attain at last to the joys of thine eternal kingdom where thou livest and reignest with the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Collect for Peace

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that, by thee, we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

The Collect for Aid against Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.
Anthem

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tu, Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb,
Jesus.

Words: anonymous Latin prayer
Music: Robert Parsons (c. 1530–1571)
from the CD Treasures of Christ Church, recorded in 2011
under the direction of Dr Stephen Darlington

Prayers

led by Canon Foot. Please join with her to say the Grace at the conclusion of the prayers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.
Virgin-born, we bow before thee;
blessèd was the womb that bore thee;
Mary, mother meek and mild,
blessèd was she in her child.

Blessèd was the breast that fed thee;
blessèd was the hand that led thee;
blessèd was the parent’s eye
that watched thy slumbering infancy.

Blessèd she by all creation,
who brought forth the world’s Salvation,
blessèd they for ever blest,
who love thee most and serve thee best.

Virgin-born we bow before thee;
blessèd was the womb that bore thee;
Mary, mother meek and mild,
blessèd was she in her child.

**Words:** Reginald Heber (1783–1826)  
**Music:** Mon Dieu, prete-moi l’oreille, *arr. Julian Dams (b. 1940)*

**Blessing**

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,  
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
Amen.
Salve Regina

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae; vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae. Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende. O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

WORDS: traditional Latin, attr. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153)
MUSIC: Robert Hacomplaynt (c. 1455–1528)