

EXETER COLLEGE CHAPEL

AN ORDER FOR  
ASH WEDNESDAY

*Welcome to this service broadcast from Exeter College, Oxford.*

*It is not possible to mark the start of the season of Lent in the customary ways – the imposition of ashes, the celebration of the Eucharist – this year. However, this service is offered as an opportunity to reflect on our humanity, our mortality, on the need for mercy and grace in our lives, and time to reassure ourselves of God's compassion. These are themes which we have had to face throughout the pandemic, and in today's service we view the start of Lent through the prism of the pandemic.*

*The music in this service is taken from a combination of the choir's archive recordings and CDs, as well as works which have been recorded in isolation during this past week. The introit is from the CD 'Mater Mundi', directed by Bartosz Thiede, and the anthem 'A Litany' is from the CD 'One thing have I desired', directed by Alistair Reid.*

## THE INTROIT

Kyrie eleison.  
Christi eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.*

*from Missa brevis, Miškinis*

## REFLECTION

### HYMN

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
and purge away my sin;  
from earth born passions set me free,  
and make me pure within.

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
with care and woe opprest;  
let me thy loving servant be,  
and taste thy promised rest.

Lord Jesus, think on me  
amid the battle's strife;  
in all my pain and misery  
be thou my health and life.

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
nor let me go astray;  
through darkness and perplexity  
point thou the heav'nly way.

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
when flows the tempest high:  
when on doth rush the enemy,  
O Saviour, be thou nigh.

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
that, when the flood is past,  
I may th' eternal brightness see,  
and share thy joy at last.

*Words: Greek, Synesius of Cyrene,  
Trans. A. Chatfield*

*Music: Southwell, from The Psalmes in English Metre  
Recorded in isolation*

## READING

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

*Joel 2*

## PSALM 51

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged. Behold, I was shapen in wickedness and in sin hath my mother conceived me. But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Turn thy face from my sins and put out all my misdeeds. Make me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy Spirit from me. O give me the comfort of thy help again and stablish me with thy free Spirit. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord and my mouth shall shew thy praise. For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise. O be favourable and gracious unto Sion build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

*Plainchant; recorded in insolation*

## READING

Christ, of his gentleness,  
Thirsting and hungering  
Walked in the Wilderness;  
Soft words of grace he spoke  
Unto lost desert—folk  
That listned wondering.  
He heard the bittern call  
From ruined palace—wall,  
Answered him brotherly;  
He held communion  
With the she—pelican  
Of lonely piety.  
Basilisk, cockatrice,  
Flocked to his homilies,  
With mail of dread device,  
With monstrous barbed stings,  
With eager dragon—eyes;  
Great bats on leathern wings  
And old, blind, broken things  
Mean in their miseries.  
Then ever with him went,  
Of all his wanderings  
Comrade, with ragged coat,  
Gaunt ribs —poor innocent —  
Bleeding foot, burning throat,  
The guileless young scapegoat;  
For forty nights and days  
Followed in Jesus' ways,  
Sure guard behind him kept,  
Tears like a lover wept.

In the Wilderness, *Robert Graves*

## ANTHEM

Drop, drop, slow tears,  
And bathe those beauteous feet  
Which brought from heaven  
The news and Prince of Peace:

Cease not, wet eyes,  
His mercy to entreat;  
To cry for vengeance  
Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods  
Drown all my faults and fears;  
Nor let his eye  
See sin, but through my tears.

*Words: P. Fletcher*

*Music: W. Walton*

## READING

Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the

glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

*Matthew 4*

## HYMN

Forty days and forty nights  
thou wast fasting in the wild;  
forty days and forty nights  
tempted, and yet undefiled.

Sunbeams scorching all the day;  
chilly dew-drops nightly shed;  
prowling beasts about thy way;  
stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.

Let us thine endurance share  
and awhile from joys abstain,  
with thee watching unto prayer,  
strong with thee to suffer pain.

And, if Satan, vexing sore,  
flesh or spirit should assail,  
thou, his vanquisher before,  
grant we may not faint nor fall!

So shall we have peace divine,  
holier gladness ours shall be;  
round us, too, shall angels shine,  
such as ministered to thee.

Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,  
ever constant by thy side;  
that with thee we may appear  
at the eternal Eastertide.

*Words: G. Smyttan and F. Pott*

*Music: Aus der Tiefe, from the Nürnbergisches Gesangbuch*

## READING

I will not fast, for I have fasted longer  
Than forty days and known a leaner Lent  
Than can be kept with ceremonial hunger,  
Since life's a lengthier season to repent  
Than the brief time when spring's first winds may tease  
The ashes on the brow, when bird songs intercept  
The misereres chanted on our knees,  
And ritual tears that I such hours have wept  
Mirror a double and a muddy vision  
That would not win a blessing from a priest.  
Hence, purity born from my pain's precision  
Refuses here to fast upon a feast,  
Glutted till now on sacraments of air,  
Memorials to loves that never were.

Reverend Impiety, *Vassar Miller*

## ANTHEM

In what torne ship soever I embarke,  
That ship shall be my emblem of thy Arke;  
What sea soever swallow me, that flood  
Shall be to me an emblem of thy blood;  
Though thou with clouds of anger do disguise Thy face;  
yet through that Maske I know thoseeyes,

Which, though they turn away sometimes,  
They never will despise.

I sacrifice this iland unto thee,  
And all whom I loved there and who loved me;  
When I have put our seas 'twixt them and mee,  
Put thou thy sea betwixt my sinnes and thee.  
As the tree's sap doth seeke the root below  
In winter, in my winter now I goe,  
Where none but thee, th'Eternall root  
Of true Love, I may know.

*Words: John Donne*  
*Music: Imogen Holst*

## READING

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

*Matthew 6*

## THE LITANY

O God the Father of heaven:

*Have mercy upon us miserable sinners.*

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world:

*Have mercy upon us miserable sinners.*

O God the Holy Ghost:

*Have mercy upon us miserable sinners.*

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity,  
three Persons and one God:

*Have mercy upon us miserable sinners.*

By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation; by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation,

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost,

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God; and that it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to keep and strengthen in the true worshipping of thee, in righteousness and holiness of life, thy Servant *ELIZABETH*, our most gracious Queen and Governor;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to endue the Government, and all Parliament, with grace, wisdom, and understanding;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to bless and keep all thy people;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort, all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to thy holy Word;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Lord, have mercy upon us.

*Christ, have mercy upon us.*

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Let us pray for grace to keep a holy Lent.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**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 those who trespass against us. And lead us not into  
temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord preserve your going you and your coming in:

**From this time forth, forever more. Amen.**

#### ORGAN VOLUNTARY

O Mensch beweine dein Sünde groß, BWV 622 J.S. Bach