Vespers for the Sunday after Ascension

Vespers is the sixth of the seven prayer services of the Christian day. Its name comes from the Latin vespera, which means ‘evening.’ When Thomas Cranmer created the English Prayer Book in 1549 and 1552 he combined Vespers with the night service (compline) into the service we know as Evensong. Magnificat is the Gospel Canticle of Vespers, as Nunc Dimittis is the Gospel Canticle of Compline. The service ends with a traditional antiphon (a special seasonal text, from which comes our modern word ‘anthem’) in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

16th May
LUCERNARIUM (The Lighting of the Lamps)

Thy word is a lantern unto my feet
and a light unto my paths.

Thou also shalt light my candle
the Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light.

The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you
and with thy spirit

Light Prayer
Blessed art thou, Sovereign Lord,
God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to thee be glory and praise for ever.
Thou hast called us out of darkness
into thy marvellous light
that our lives may reflect thy glory
and our lips repeat thy song:
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

HYMN

LUCIS Creator optime
lucem dierum proferens,
primordiis lucis novae,
mundi parans originem:

O BLEST Creator of the light,
Who mak'st the day with radiance bright,
and o'er the forming world didst call
the light from chaos first of all;

Qui mane iunctum vesperi
diem vocari praecipis:
taetrum chaos illabitur,
audi preces cum fletibus.

Whose wisdom joined in meet array
the morn and eve, and named them Day:
night comes with all its darkling fears;
regard Thy people's prayers and tears.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
cum Spiritu Paraclito
regnans per omne saeculum. Amen.

O Father, that we ask be done,
through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee
doth live and reign eternally. Amen.
VESPERS

℣ O God make speed to save us.
℟ O Lord, make haste to help us.

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. Alleluia.

PSALMODY

Psalm 47
1 O clap your hands together, all ye people
   O sing unto God with the voice of melody.

2 For the Lord is high, and to be feared
   he is the great King upon all the earth.

3 He shall subdue the people under us
   and the nations under our feet.

4 He shall choose out an heritage for us
   even the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.

5 God is gone up with a merry noise
   and the Lord with the sound of the trump.

6 O sing praises, sing praises unto our God
   O sing praises, sing praises unto our King.

7 For God is the King of all the earth
   sing ye praises with understanding.

8 God reigneth over the heathen
   God sitteth upon his holy seat.

9 The princes of the people are joined unto the
   people of the God of Abraham
   For God, which is very highly exalted, doth defend
   the earth, as it were with a shield.

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.
To mark our celebration of the Easter season in Chapel, this canticle is sung

Apocalypse Canticle

Antiphon
Laudem dicite Deo nostro, omnes servieius, pusilli et magni, alleluia
Praise our God, all his servants, both small and great, alleluia

Alleluia. Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.
Alleluia. For true and righteous are his judgements. Alleluia.
Praise our God, all ye his servants. Alleluia.
And ye that fear him, both small and great. Alleluia.
For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Alleluia.
Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him. Alleluia
For the marriage of the Lamb is come. Alleluia.
And his wife hath made herself ready. Alleluia.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son. Alleluia.
And to the Holy Ghost. Alleluia.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: Alleluia.

LITTLE CHAPTER       John 17. 6-19

I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.
REFLECTION

HYMN  Ad regias Agni dapes

Jesus, our Redeemer,
Our love and desire,
God, Creator of all things,
becomes human in fullness of time.

What mercy overcame you
That you carried our offences,
Suffering a cruel death
To rescue us from death?

Descending to Hell’s prison,
Setting your prisoners free,
Victor in noble triumph,
You sit at God’s right hand.

Let Pity herself compel you
To overcome our wrongs by pardoning;
While we give self to prayer,
The sight of you is all for us.

Be our joy,
Be our reward;
Let all our glory be in you
Throughout all ages, evermore.

Thou art gone up on high, alleluia
Thou hast led captivity captive, alleluia

MAGNIFICAT  Collegium Regale  Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Antiphon

Haec locutus sum vobis ut, cum venerit hora eorum, reminiscamini quia ego dixi vobis, alleluia.
I have said these things to you so that, when their time comes, you may remember how I said so to you.

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 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.

**PRAYERS These end with the following**

**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.**

**The Collect for the day and/or this following**

O Lord, who by triumphing over the powers of darkness didst prepare our place in the new Jerusalem:
Grant us, who have this day given thanks for thy resurrection, to praise thee in that city, whereof thou art the light; where with the Father and the Holy Ghost, thou livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

**MOTET Omnes gentes Christopher Tye (1505-73)**
A setting of the Latin text of the Ascensiontide psalm, 47

*Omnes gentes, plaudite manibus; jubilate Deo in voce exsultationis: Quoniam Dominus excelsus, terribilis, rex magnus super omnem terram. Subjecit populos nobis, et gentes sub pedibus nostris. Elegit nobis haereditatem suam; speciem Jacob quam dilexit. Ascendit Deus in jubilo, et Dominus in voce tubae. Psallite Deo nostro, psallite; psallite regi nostro, psallite; Quoniam rex omnis terrae Deus, psallite sapienter. Regnabit Deus super gentes; Deus sedet super sedem sanctam suam. Principes populorum congregati sunt cum Deo Abraham, Quoniam dii fortes terrae vehementer elevunt.*
CONCLUSION

Dominus vobiscum  The Lord be with you
Et cum spiritu tuo  And with thy spirit

Benedicamus Domino  Let us bless the Lord
Deo gratias  Thanks be to God.

Defunctorum animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace.
May the souls of the departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

REGINA CAELI

Regina cæli, laetare, alleluia;  Queen of heaven, rejoice,
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,  For the one you were worthy to bear
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia:  Has risen, as he promised:
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.  Pray for us to God.

Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.  Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary
Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.  For the Lord has risen indeed.

DR CAIUS’S PRAYER for daily use in the College

Deus pacis et dilectionis maneat semper nobiscum.
The God of peace and love remain with us always.

ORGAN POSTLUDE

Toccata Quinta  Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643)