



MERTON COLLEGE

The Chapel of St Mary and St John

EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE
5.45pm Sunday 19 January

Welcome to Merton College Chapel for this evening's Epiphany Carol Service. This evening's service is sung by the College Choir & Choristers. Epiphany means 'manifestation', and the Feast of the Epiphany marks the manifesting and revealing of Jesus to the world. The earliest observances of the feast, and many Orthodox Churches today, mark it as a celebration of the Incarnation, and so this carol service begins by recalling that the Christ who was born at Christmas is the 'Word made flesh'.

In the Western church, the Epiphany became an occasion to celebrate one element in the story of Christ's birth: the visit of the far-travelled Magi and the mystical significance of their gifts. St Matthew's account, which we shall hear this evening, speaks simply of 'wise men from the east'. Later tradition fixed their number at three, made them kings and recalled their resonant names—Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. The Book of Common Prayer subtitles this Feast 'The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles', reminding us of the universality of God's love and that the good news of Jesus Christ is for all people.

The next theme of the feast is the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan by John the Baptist, when the heavens were opened and a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son. The miracle at Cana in Galilee follows, the first of the signs that reveal His glory. The Epiphany season concludes at Candlemas, the commemoration of Christ's presentation in the Temple, which we shall celebrate on Sunday 2 February.

PRELUDES

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern *Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)*

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern BuxWV 223

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

Les bergers

Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)

Les mages

Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)

**Visitors are welcome to take photos before and after the service.
Filming and photography are not permitted during the service.**



Please be aware that this service is being livestreamed.

The recording will be published, transmitted or broadcast on YouTube and may be published in official University or College publications and in University or College publicity materials, including University-or College-affiliated websites and may be circulated to the press and other broadcast media and websites for publication, transmission or broadcast. If you do not wish to appear in the Livestream, please speak to the Verger.

THE INCARNATION

The bell rings, the Chapel lights are dimmed and the congregation remains seated as the College Choir sings the Introit from the Ante-Chapel.

Choir *Hodie Christus natus es*

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)

This day was Christ born, noe, noe ...

This day the Saviour appeared, noe, noe ...

Today on earth the angels sing,

and archangels rejoice, noe, noe ...

Today the just exult saying:

Glory be to God in the highest, noe, noe ...

*based on the Magnificat Antiphon
for Second Vespers, Christmas Day*

Reading Matthew 1.18-23

St Matthew recounts the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel.

Reflection *from an Oration of Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390)*

The priest praises God for the light of the incarnation.

The prayer concludes

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

All stand to sing the processional hymn as the choirs and clergy enter the Chapel.

Tr. F. Oakeley, W. T. Brooke
and others

Composer unknown (probably 18th c.)
arranged by David Willcocks



O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him
born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Lo! star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
we to the Christ Child
bring our hearts' oblations:
O come, let us adore him . . .

Child, for us sinners
poor and in a manger,
fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;
who would not love thee,
loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him . . .

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
glory to God
in the highest:

O come, let us adore him . . .

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born that happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:

O come, let us adore him . . .

*Latin, 18th century
tr. Frederick Oakley (1802-80) and others*

*The priest reads the Bidding Prayer
and all say together the Lord's Prayer.*

All Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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.

All sit.

Choir

Glory be to the Word

Roxanna Panufnik (b. 1968)

Glory to that voice who became a body,
And to the Word of the High One who then became flesh.
Ears could even hear Him, eyes beheld Him,
Hands could even touch Him, the mouth received Him.

Limbs and earthly senses give thanks to the One
Who came and revived what had died within us all.
Mary was bearing a speechless infant,
though in Him all languages, were on His little tongue.

Joseph was holding Him, yet hidden in that
Babe was an ancient nature older than ev'rything.
He was lying down as a child, yet hidden in Him
was a treasure of wisdom that is relevant to all.

Lying down, He was suckled by the milk of Mary,
though by His goodness all creatures were nourished as well.
He is the beating heart and the living breath,
by His life the dead were nourishes, so they were revived.

Without a breath of air, no one can survive,
without the might of the Son, no one can thrive.
Without the Firstborn no one can come into existence,
Only Jesus can bring us into the sacred light.

Traditional Syriac hymn.

This arrangement was composed in 2024 in support of Three Peas, a charity aiding Middle Eastern refugees stranded in camps on Greek islands.

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

Reading Matthew 2.1-11

The Magi are led by the star to Jesus.

Reflection *from a sermon of Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)
preached before King James I at Whitehall, 1620*

The priest praises God, King of the Universe

The prayer concludes

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Choir *The Three Kings*

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

O balow, balow la lay,
The first king was very young,
With doleful ballads on his tongue.
He came bearing a branch of myrrh
Than which no gall is bitterer,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

O balow, balow la lay.
The second king was a man in prime,
The solemn priest of a solemn time,
With eyes downcast and rev'rent feet
He brought his incense sad and sweet,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

O balow, balow la lay.
The third king was very old,
Both his hands were full of gold.
Many a gaud and a glittering toy
Baubles brave for a baby boy.
Gifts for a baby King, O.

Dorothy L Sayers (1893-1957)

All stand for the hymn, during which *gold, incense, and unction* is brought into the Chapel, symbolising the offering of the Magi.

THREE KINGS OF ORIENT 88 446 and refrain

J. H. Hopkins 1820-1891



Caspar, Melchior & Balthazar

We three kings of Orient are,
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star:

All ***O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.***

Caspar Born a king on Bethlehem plain,
gold I bring to crown him again:
king for ever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign.

All ***O star of wonder, star of night . . .***

Melchior Frankincense to offer have I,
incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising all men raising:
worship him, God most high.

All ***O star of wonder, star of night . . .***

Balthazar Myrrh is mine: its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in a stone-cold tomb.

All ***O star of wonder, star of night . . .***

The gifts are received at the altar, each concluding with

All Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Blessed be God for ever.

The gifts are censed.

Caspar, Melchior & Balthazar

Glorious now, behold him arise,
King and God and sacrifice!
Heaven sings 'Alleluia',
'Alleluia' the earth replies.

All ***O star of wonder, star of night...***

JH Hopkins (1820-91)

All sit.

Reading *Journey of the Magi*

TS Eliot (1888-1965)

Choir

Omnes de Saba

Orlande de Lassus (1530/32-94)

All they from Sheba shall come:
they shall bring gold and incense;
and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. Alleluia.
The Kings of Tharsis and of the isles shall give him presents;
the Kings of Arabia and Sheba shall bring gifts. Alleluia.

Isaiah 60.6; Psalm 72.10

Gradual and Offertory at Mass, the Epiphany of Our Lord

Homily

The Revd Canon Justin White
Chaplain

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

All stand. The congregation lights their hand-held candles and follows the choirs and clergy into the Ante-Chapel to gather round the font.

HYMN

MOSCOW 664 66 64

Adapted from a tune by F. Giardini 1716-96
in Madan's *Collection* 1769



Thou whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight;
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.

Thou, who didst come to bring
on thy redeeming wing
healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind,
O now to all mankind
let there be light.

Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy Dove,
speed forth thy flight;
move o'er the water's face,
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.

Blessed and holy Three,
glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might;
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth far and wide
let there be light!

John Marriott (1780-1825)

HYMN

Samuel Sebastian Wesley 1810-76

HEREFORD LM



The sinless one to Jordan came
to share our fallen nature's blame;
God's righteousness he thus fulfilled
and chose the path his Father willed.

Uprising from the waters there,
the voice from heaven did witness bear
that he, the Son of God, had come
to lead his scattered people home.

Above him, see the heavenly Dove,
the sign of God the Father's love,
now by the Holy Spirit shed
upon the Son's anointed head.

How blest that mission then begun
to heal and save a race undone;
straight to the wilderness he goes
to wrestle with his people's foes.

Dear Lord, let those baptized from sin
go forth from you, a world to win,
and send the Holy Spirit's power
to shield them in temptation's hour.

On you shall all your people feed,
and know you are the Bread indeed,
who gives eternal life to those
that with you died, and with you rose.

GB Timms (1910-97)

Reading Matthew 3.13-end
St Matthew tells of the baptism of Jesus.

Reflection *from an Oration of Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390)*

The priest praises God, the Well of Life.

The prayer concludes

All Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Blessed be God for ever.

The priest pours water into the font.

All Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

All Father, for your gift of water in creation
we give you thanks and praise.

All For your Spirit, sweeping over the waters,
bringing light and life
we give you thanks and praise.

All For your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
baptized in the river Jordan
we give you thanks and praise.

All For your new creation, brought to birth by water and the Spirit
we give you thanks and praise.

All For your grace bestowed upon us your children,
washing away our sins
we give you thanks and praise.

All So, Father, accept our sacrifice of praise.
By the power of your life-giving Spirit
bless these waters of your new creation.
Lord, receive our prayer.

All May we your servants who have been washed in them
be made one with your Son, who took the form of a servant.
Lord, receive our prayer.

All May your Holy Spirit, who has brought us to new birth
in the family of your Church,
raise us in Christ, our anointed Lord, to full and eternal life.
Lord, receive our prayer.

All For all might, majesty and dominion are yours,
now and for ever.
Alleluia. Amen.

Choir *Tribus miraculis* Gabriel Jackson (b. 1965)

We celebrate a day sanctified
by three miracles:
today a star led the wise men to the manger;
today water was changed into wine
at the marriage feast;
today Christ chose
to be baptized by John
so that he might save us. Alleluia.

*Magnificat Antiphon.
Second Vespers of the Epiphany*

*All join in an act of penitence and dedication.
This response is made after each petition:*

All From all our sins, O Lord;
wash us, and we shall be clean.

After the last petition, the congregation is sprinkled with water as a symbol of the baptism which unites all Christian people.

Choristers *A New Year Carol*

Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

Here we bring new water from the well so clear,
For to worship God with, this happy New Year.
*Sing levy-dew, sing levy-dew,
the water and the wine,
The seven bright gold wires
and the bugles that do shine.*

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her toe,
Open you the West Door, and turn the Old Year go.
*Sing levy-dew, sing levy-dew,
the water and the wine,
The seven bright gold wires
and the bugles that do shine.*

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her chin,
Open you the East Door, and let the New Year in.
*Sing levy-dew, sing levy-dew,
the water and the wine,
The seven bright gold wires
and the bugles that do shine.*

Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

The act of thanksgiving concludes with a final prayer to which all respond

All **Amen.**

THE WEDDING FEAST

The choirs, servers, and clergy lead the procession, returning to their places in Chapel. The congregation follow them.

HYMN

ST EDMUND 77 77 D

Charles Steggall 1826-1905



Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesu, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee address,
God in man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine:
anthems be to thee address,
God in man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill:
anthems be to thee address,
God in man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany;
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85)

All sit.

Reading John 2.1-11
Jesus reveals his glory at the wedding feast.

Reflection *from a hymn of Ephrem of Syria (306-373)*

The priest praises God for the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

The prayer concludes

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Choir *Benedicamus Domino!* Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

A boy comes forth,
Come then, this is our time,
from the womb of a virgin,
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

Without the seed of man
Come then, this is our time,
he is born of a virgin.

Without the means of a man
Come then, this is our time,
he is born of Mary.

On this appointed feast,
Come then, this is our time,
let us bless the Lord!

Anon.

DISMISSAL

All stand and face the altar as the priest prays the Collect of the Epiphany, to which all respond

All Amen.

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All *The priest gives the blessing to which all respond*
Amen.

All Go in the light and peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God!

The procession leaves the Chapel as all sing the final hymn

WAS LEBET 13 10 13 10

Melody from the *Rheinhardt MS 1754*



O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name!

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,
comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine:
truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

These though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness
he will accept for the name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name!

JSB Monsell (1811-75)

VOLUNTARY *Dieu parmi nous*

Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)

*The organ voluntary is part of the service.
Please feel free to stay in the Chapel to listen to it, if you would like to.*

*Our retiring collections this term will be given to support
The Abingdon Bridge, a local charity offering free and confidential
counselling and wellbeing support for young people.
The collection plate is in the Ante-Chapel.*

SERVICES THIS WEEK

Monday

8.15 Morning Prayer

6.00 Choral Vespers
music by Britten

Tuesday

8.15 Morning Prayer

12.30 Eucharist *followed by lunch*

6.15 Choral Evensong
music by Sumsion & Tavener

Wednesday

8.15 Morning Prayer

6.15 Choral Evensong
music by Wood & Darke

Thursday

8.15 Morning Prayer

6.15 Choral Evensong
music by Bingham & Poulenc

9.00 Messiaen's La Nativité du Seigneur

Friday

8.15 Morning Prayer

CHAPEL NOTES

- If you would like to receive the weekly **Chapel email**, please email jennifer.crompton@merton.ox.ac.uk to be added to the email list.
- If you are interested in **reading** or **serving** in Chapel on Sundays or during the week, or assisting in chapel in any other way, please have a word with one of the Chaplains.
- If you are interested in being **baptized** and / or **confirmed** in the Chapel, please speak to one of the Chaplains.
- The Chapel can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram where we post updates about everything that is happening in Chapel. Please like and follow us! **Our social media hub** can be accessed by scanning the QR code



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