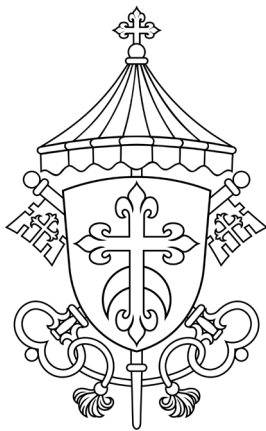


ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL



First Vespers

The Office of Evening Prayer



The Nativity of the Lord

24 December 2025

5.00pm

THE OFFICE OF VESPERS

Vespers, also called Evening Prayer, is part of the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church fulfills Jesus' command to "pray continually". Through hymns, psalms, canticles, readings, and prayers, the people of God sanctify the day by continual praise of God and intercession for the needs of the world.

The Liturgy of the Hours includes several specified times of prayer. The most important times are Morning Prayer: Lauds (which takes place upon rising) and Evening Prayer: Vespers (which takes place as dusk begins to fall). The Office of Vespers gives thanks for the day just past and makes an evening sacrifice of praise to God.

Bishops, priests, deacons, and many men and women in consecrated life pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day. Their work is organised around this prayer, keeping God always at the center of their days. Lay people are encouraged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as well, especially Morning and Evening Prayer. The public singing of Lauds and Vespers is a regular part of the life and worship of St Mary's Cathedral.

ORDER OF VESPERS

At the sound of the Sacristy bell all stand.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OFFICE

℣ Deus, in adiutorium meum intende.	<i>O God, come to our aid.</i>
℟ Domine, ad adiuvandum me festina.	<i>O Lord, make haste to help us.</i>
Gloria Patri et Filio	<i>Glory be to the Father and to the Son</i>
et Spiritui Sancto.	<i>and to the Holy Spirit,</i>
Sicut erat in principio	<i>as it was in the beginning,</i>
et nunc et semper	<i>is now, and ever shall be,</i>
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. Alleluia.	<i>world without end. Amen. Alleluia.</i>

OFFICE HYMN

Christe, redemptor omnium, Ex Patre, Patris Unice, Solus ante principium Natus ineffabiliter,	<i>O Christ, Redeemer of our race, Thou brightness of the Father's face, Of him, and with him ever one, Ere times and seasons had begun.</i>
Tu lumen, tu splendor Patris, Tu spes perennis omnium, Intende quas fundunt preces Tui per orbem servuli.	<i>Thou art that very light of light, Unfailing hope in sin's dark night, Hear thou the prayers thy people pray, The wide world o'er, this blessed day.</i>
Salutis auctor, recole Quod nostri quondam corporis, Ex illibata Virgine Nascendo, formam sumpseris.	<i>Remember, Lord of life and grace, How once, to save a ruined race, Thou didst our very flesh assume In Mary's undefiled womb.</i>
Hic praesens testatur dies, Currens per anni circulum, Quod solus a sede Patris Mundi salus adveneris;	<i>Today, as year by year its light Sheds o'er the world a radiance bright, One precious truth is echoed on, 'Tis thou hast saved us, thou alone.</i>
Hunc caelum, terra, hunc mare, Hunc omne quod in eis est, Auctorem adventus tui Laudat exsultans cantico.	<i>Thou from the Father's throne didst come To call his banished children home; And heav'n, and earth, and sea and shore His love who sent thee here adore.</i>
Nos quoque, qui sancto tuo Redempti sumus sanguine, Ob diem natalis tui Hymnum novum concinimus.	<i>And gladsome too are we today, Whose guilt thy blood has washed away; Redeemed the new made song we sing; It is the birthday of our King.</i>
Iesu, tibi sit gloria, Qui natus est de Virgine, Cum Patre et almo Spiritu, In sempiterna saecula. Amen.	<i>O Lord, the virgin born, to thee Eternal praise and glory be, Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Ghost for evermore. Amen.</i>

arr. Matthew Martin (b. 1976)

All sit.

PSALMODY

FIRST ANTIPHON

REX pacificus magnificatus est, cuius
vultum desiderat universa terra.

*The King of Peace has shown himself in
glory: all the peoples desire to see him.*

PSALM 112 (113)

Laudate, pueri Domini, *Praise, O servants of the Lord,*
laudate nomen Domini. *praise the name of the Lord!*

Sit nomen Domini benedictum *May the name of the Lord be blessed*
ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum. *both now and for evermore!*

A solis ortu usque ad occasum *From the rising of the sun to its setting*
laudabile nomen Domini. *praised be the name of the Lord!*

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, *High above all nations is the Lord,*
super cælos gloria eius. *above the heavens his glory.*

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, *Who is like the Lord, our God,*
qui in altis habitat *who has risen on high to his throne*
et se inclinat, *yet stoops from the heights to look down,*
ut respiciat in cælum et in terram? *to look down upon heaven and earth?*

Suscitans de terra inopem, *From the dust he lifts up the lowly,*
de stercore erigens pauperem, *from the dungheap he raises the poor*

ut collocet eum cum principibus, *to set him in the company of princes,*
cum principibus populi sui. *yes, with the princes of his people.*

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, *To the childless wife he gives a home*
matrem filiorum lætantem. *and gladdens her heart with children.*

Gloria Patri et Filio *Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
et Spiritui Sancto. *and to the Holy Spirit,*

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper *as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,*
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. *world without end. Amen.*

The Antiphon is repeated.

SECOND ANTIPHON

COMPLETI sunt dies Mariae, ut
pareret filium suum primogenitum.

*The time has come for Mary to give birth
to a son, her first-born.*

PSALM 147 (147B)

Lauda, Ierusalem, Dominum; *O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!*
collauda Deum tuum, Sion. *Zion, praise your God!*

Quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum, *He has strengthened the bars of your gates*
benedixit filiis tuis in te. *he has blessed the children within you.*

Qui ponit fines tuos pacem *He established peace on your borders,*
et adipe frumenti satiat te. *he feeds you with finest wheat.*

Qui emittit eloquium suum terræ, *He sends out his word to the earth*
velociter currit verbum eius. *and swiftly runs his command.*

Qui dat nivem sicut lanam, *He showers down snow white as wool,*
pruinam sicut cinerem spargit. *he scatters hoar-frost like ashes.*

Mittit crystallum suam sicut buccellas; *He hurls down hailstones like crumbs.*
ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit? *The waters are frozen at his touch;*

Emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea, *he sends forth his word and it melts them:*
flabit spiritus eius, et fluent aquæ. *at the breath of his mouth the waters flow.*

Qui annuntiat verbum suum Iacob, *He makes his word known to Jacob,*
iustitias et iudicia sua Israel. *to Israel his laws and decrees.*

Non fecit taliter omni nationi, *He has not dealt thus with other nations;*
et iudicia sua non manifestavit eis. *he has not taught them his decrees.*

Gloria Patri et Filio *Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
et Spiritui Sancto. *and to the Holy Spirit,*

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper *as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,*
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. *world without end. Amen.*

The Antiphon is repeated.

THIRD ANTIPHON

VERBUM supernum, a Patre ante tempora genitum,
hodie pro nobis factum caro, exinanivit semetipsum.

*The Word of God, born of the Father before time began,
humbled himself today for us and became man.*

CANTICLE

Philippians 2:6-11

Christus Iesus, cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se æqualem Deo,	<i>Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.</i>
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sed semetipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus; et habitu inventus ut homo,	<i>He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form,</i>
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humiliavit semetipsum factus oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.	<i>he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.</i>
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Propter quod et Deus illum exaltavit et donavit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen,	<i>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,</i>
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ut in nomine Iesu omne genu flectatur cælestium et terrestrium et infernorum	<i>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,</i>
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et omnis lingua confiteatur: Dominus Iesus Christus, in gloriam Dei Patris.	<i>And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</i>
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Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.	<i>Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,</i>
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Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.	<i>as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.</i>
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The Antiphon is repeated.

WHEN the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons.

SHORT RESPONSORY

Hodie scietis	<i>Today you know</i>
Quia veniet Dominus.	<i>that the Lord will come.</i>

℣. Et mane videbitis	<i>In the morning</i>
gloriam eius. ℟.	<i>you will see his glory.</i>

℣. Gloria Patri et Filio	<i>Glory be to the Father and to the Son</i>
et Spiritui Sancto. ℟.	<i>and to the Holy Spirit.</i>

All stand.

MAGNIFICAT ANTIPHON

DUM ortus fuerit sol de cælo, videbitis Regem regum procedentem a Patre, tamquam sponsum de thalamo suo.

When the sun rises in the heavens you will see the king of kings. He comes forth from the Father like a bridegroom coming in splendour from his wedding chamber.

MAGNIFICAT

Octavi toni

David Bevan (1951-2021)

Magnificat *My soul*
anima mea Dominum, *glorifies the Lord,*

et exsultavit spiritus meus *my spirit rejoices*
in Deo salutari meo, *in God, my Saviour.*

quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ. *He looks on his servant in her lowliness;*
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent *henceforth all ages*
omnes generationes, *will call me blessed.*

quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, *The Almighty works marvels for me.*
et sanctum nomen eius, *Holy his name!*

et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies *His mercy is from age to age,*
timentibus eum. *on those who fear him.*

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, *He puts forth his arm in strength*
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui; *and scatters the proud-hearted.*

deposuit potentes de sede; *He casts the mighty from their thrones*
et exaltavit humiles; *and raises the lowly.*

esurientes implevit bonis *He fills the starving with good things,*
et divites dimisit inanes. *sends the rich away empty.*

Suscepit Israel puerum suum, *He protects Israel, his servant,*
recordatus misericordiæ suæ, *remembering his mercy,*

sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, *the mercy promised to our fathers,*
Abraham et semini eius in sæcula. *to Abraham and his sons for ever.*

Gloria Patri et Filio, *Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
et Spiritui Sancto. *and to the Holy Spirit,*

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper *as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,*
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. *world without end. Amen.*

The Antiphon is repeated.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us turn in prayer to Christ who emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave. He was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin.

R. Save us through your birth.

Coming into our world, Lord Jesus, you open the new age which the prophets foretold. In every age, may the Church come again to new birth. **R.**

You took on our human weakness. Be the eyes of the blind, the strength of the weak, the friend of the lonely. **R.**

Lord, you were born among the poor: show them your love. **R.**

Your birth brings eternal life within mankind's reach; comfort the dying with hope of new life in heaven. **R.**

Gather the departed to yourself; and make them radiant in your glory. **R.**

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All sing

O UR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our dai-ly bread,
and forgive us our trespasses, as we for-give those who trespass a-gainst us;
and lead us not in-to temp-ta-tion, but de-liv-er us from e- vil.

COLLECT

FILL us with confidence, Lord God,
when your Only-begotten Son comes as our judge.
We welcome him with joy as our redeemer;
year by year renew that joy,
as we await the fulfilment of our redemption
by Jesus Christ our Lord, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

℟: **Amen.**

All sit.

The Choir sings

THE MOTET

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum
natum iacentem in præsepio. O beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt portare
Dominum Iesum Christum. Alleluia.

*O great mystery and wondrous thing that the animals behold the new-born Lord lying
in a manger. O blessed Virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia.*

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

All stand.

CONCLUSION OF THE OFFICE

The Lord be with you.

℟: **And with your spirit.**

May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and
minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

℟: **Amen.**

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

℟: **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

℟: **Thanks be to God.**

The Choir sings the

ANTIPHON TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

ALMA Redemptóris Mater, quæ pérvia cæli Porta manes, et stella maris, succúrre
Acadénti, Súrgere qui curat pópulo. Tu quæ genuísti, Natúra miránte, tuum
sanctum Genitórem Virgo prius ac postérius, Gabriélis ab ore Sumens illud Ave,
peccatórum miserére.

*Loving Mother of the Redeemer, who remains the accessible Gateway of Heaven, and
Star of the Sea, give aid to a falling people that strives to rise. O Thou who begot thy holy
Creator, while all nature marvelled, Virgin before and after receiving that “Ave” from the
mouth of Gabriel, have mercy on sinners.*

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Carillon for Christmas

Brenda Portman (b. 1980)

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