



THE CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY

Candlelit Reflection with Organ Meditation

based on *La nativité du Seigneur (The Birth of the Saviour)*
by Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)



The Fourth Sunday of Advent

22nd December 2024

5.30pm

Quire

Welcome to Canterbury Cathedral for this Service

Livestreaming

This service will be livestreamed and you may be seen on camera, although we will not deliberately take any close-ups of the congregation.

By attending you agree to be seen in this way.

If you have any concerns please speak to a member of the clergy.

Cover Image: A Nativity Window, by Christopher Whall (1849-1924), South-West Transept, Canterbury Cathedral

La Nativité du Seigneur, neuf méditations pour orgue (The Birth of the Lord, nine meditations for organ) is a work for organ, written by the French composer Olivier Messiaen in 1935. The work was written by the composer at the age of 26 years during the summer while he was in residence at Grenoble near the French Alps. Messiaen wrote that in addition to theology, the movements were inspired by the mountains, as well as the stained glass windows in medieval cathedrals. The nine movement work was premiered on 27 February 1936 on the organ of La Trinité, Paris, where Messiaen was titular organist. The performance was split among three players: Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur, Jean Langlais and Jean-Jacques Grunenwald.



THE COLLECTION is an opportunity to give generously to Canterbury Cathedral in response to God's generosity, and there are many ways to give regularly.



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By cash or cheques payable to 'Canterbury Cathedral' in Gift Aid envelopes - UK taxpayers please fill in the details on the envelope.



Please ensure that mobile phones are switched off. No form of visual or sound recording, or any form of photography, is permitted during Services. Thank you for your co-operation.



An induction loop system for the hard of hearing is installed in the Cathedral. Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to T.



Large print orders of service are available from the stewards and virgers. Please ask.

Introduction

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

All-powerful God,
your eternal Word took flesh on our earth
when the Virgin Mary
placed her life at the service of your plan.
Lift our minds in watchful hope
to hear the voice which announces his glory
and open our minds to receive the Spirit
who prepares us for his coming. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As we join our prayers with the Church Universal, so we say,
each in our own language, the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours

now and for ever.

Amen.

Notre Père...

Vater Unser...

Onze Vader...

Padre Nuestro...

Ojcie Nasz...

Baba Yetu...

E to matou Matua...

Ein Tad...

Reading

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

Luke 1:30-31

1. **La vierge et l'enfant (The Virgin and Child)**, approximately 6'30"

Reading

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:8-11

2. **Les bergers (The Shepherds)**, approximately 7'

Reading

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17

3. **Desseins éternels (Eternal purposes)**, approximately 6'

Poem

Immersion

There is anger abroad in the world, a numb thunder,
because of God's silence. But how naïve,
to keep wanting words we could speak ourselves,
English, Urdu, Tagalog, the French of Tours, the French of Haiti...
Yes, that was one way omnipotence chose
to address us—Hebrew, Aramaic, or whatever the patriarchs
chose in their turn to call what they heard. Moses
demanded the word, spoken and written. But perfect freedom
assured other ways of speech. God is surely
patiently trying to immerse us in a different language,
events of grace, horrifying scrolls of history
and the unearned retrieval of blessings lost for ever,
the poor grass returning after drought, timid, persistent.
God's abstention is only from human dialects. The holy voice
utters its woe and glory in myriad musics, in signs and portents.
Our own words are for us to speak, a way to ask and to answer.

Denise Levertov from This Great Unknowing, 1999

4. **Le verbe (The Word)**, approximately 14'

Reading

It is decisive even for all of us today to rediscover the beauty of being children of God, to be brothers and sisters among ourselves, because we have been united in Christ, who redeemed us. The differences and contrasts that separation creates should not exist among believers in Christ. We create these differences, many times unconsciously so. No, we are equal! Rather, our vocation is that of making concrete and evident the call to unity of the entire human race. Everything that exacerbates the differences between people, often causing discrimination -- all of this, before God, no longer has any basis, thanks to the salvation effected in Christ.

Pope Francis, General Audience, 8 September 2021

5. **Les enfants de Dieu (The Children of God)**, approximately 4'

Reading

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" Luke 2:13-14

6. **Les anges (The Angels)**, approximately 3'

Poem

The Gardener at Christmas

Rake, fork, spade, cleaned and oiled,
Idle indoors; seeds, knotty with destiny, rattle
Inside their paper jackets. The travelling birds
Have left; predictable locals
Mooch in the early dusk.

He dreams of a future in apples,
Of three white lilies in flower,
Of a tree that could bear a man.

He sits back and waits
For it all to happen.

U A Fanthorpe, Collected Poems 1978-2003

7. **Jésus accepte la souffrance (Jesus accepts suffering)**, approximately 4'30"

Reading

When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. Matthew 2:9-10

8. **Les mages (The Magi)**, approximately 6'30"

Advent Litany from the Sisters of the Church

Let us pray

God our Creator,
you have created us in your image
and have placed within us a longing so great
that we hardly dare own it.

Give us the courage to dare to hunger for you with our whole being
so that in hungering for you, we live for you
loving you in our every breath, thought and action.

Come to our longing, O God of Eternal Joy.

O Christ, you are the immense longing of God,
a longing which calls and embarrasses us
in its vulnerability and entirety,
a longing that delights and terrifies us.
Come, come and confront our poor love
with the humility and recklessness of your self-giving
so that we may abandon all that binds us
and anoint you with the fearless surrender of our lives.

Come to our longing, O God of Eternal Joy.

O Holy life-giving Spirit,
you are the joy of Heaven that longs to fill us,
the might of God that longs to empower us,
the brokenness of God that longs to restore us.
Come, come to our fears and our reluctance
our apathy and our cowardice,
for you can bring life to the deserts of our hearts,
you can bring song to the darkest night.

Come to our longing, O God of Eternal Joy.

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ
came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

9. Dieu parmi nous (God Among Us), approximately 9'

We leave in silence

*There will be a retiring collection for the work of the Cathedral,
which costs £30,000 a day to keep open.*

*This includes the maintenance and tuning of the Great Organ played
tonight, to ensure that the Worship of God in this place is the best
that we can offer. Please give generously. You can use the QR code
below to give online, or use the card readers at each exit.*

