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Notker Balbulus
The Hymnbook

Eastertide
[N.12] – [N.28]

Let us sing in choir praises to our Saviour with suppliant voice and with pious phrases let us call out to our Master in heaven, the Messiah, Who emptied His very Self, that He might free us men that are lost!

Covering the glory of His Godhead in flesh He is swaddled in a manger and pitieth the transgressor of the Law that is driven from his Fatherland in Paradise to become a poor little naked thing.

He is subject to Joseph, Mary, Simeon. He is circumcised and, with the victim appointed by the Law, He is cleansed as if He were a sinner, Who is wont to unloose our crimes.

He submitted Himself to be baptized at the hands of His servant and beareth the deceits of the tempter, He fleeth the stones of those that pursue Him.

He endureth hunger, He knoweth weariness and sadness, He washeth the feet of His disciples, God that is Man, the Highest become Low.

But yet among these debasements of the body His Godhead could in no way lie hidden and is betrayed by signs of many kinds and teachings.

At the wedding feast He giveth water that savoureth of wine. He clothed eyes that are blind with radiant light. He putteth wan leprosy to flight with His gentle touch.

He raiseth the stinking dead and healeth limbs that are grown frail. He stopped the flow of blood and filled from five loaves five thousands.

He walketh across the billowing lake as if dry shore: He calmeth the winds. He unlocketh the tongue that is tied. He unclosed ears stopped to voices. He cast out fevers.

After these miraculous wonders – so excellent – of His own accord He is seized and condemned, nor did He disdain to be fixed to a cross: But the sun did not witness His death.

Now hath dawned the day that the Lord hath made, laying waste to death and manifesting Himself as victor, living to those that love Him: First to Mary, then to the apostles, teaching the scriptures, opening the heart, that they might unlock what is shut up therein concerning Himself.

Thus all Creation haileth the risen Christ with joy. Flowers, crops flourish with renewed fruit, and birds call sweetly, now that the unhappy frost hath been swept away.

Sun and moon, disordered at Christ's death, shine more radiantly. The earth, which trembleth at His death and threateneth to fall, putteth forth grass and applaudeth the risen Christ.

Therefore let us rejoice today, on which Jesus, rising again, hath opened to us the path of life!

Stars, earth, sea are glad, and spiritual choirs, all that in the heavens are, render thanks to the God of Thunder.

For Easter Monday

[N.13] Is qui prius

He Who earlier put on mortal habit, that He might fight, now, rising again in immortality, hath assumed a body free from all suffering, that He might rule over heavens and earth and sea.

Who, raised to the seat of His Father, with His right hand giveth course to the rivers and voice, and strengtheneth alway the Christian sphere, and holdeth the waves of the sea in such check that He stablisheth mightily a firm foundation for His Church and His House shineth unto the end of days.

For Easter Tuesday

[N.14] Christe domine laetifica

O Christ, our Lord, gladden Thou the Church, Thy spouse, on these feast days, on which, o Christ, Thou didst espouse her to Thyself by bestowing on her a dower that is truly marvellous!

Then, Thou didst comfort holy women and men, saddened at Thy death, by rising again.

Now, sitting at the right hand of Thy Father, protect Thou us, o Christ, from every assault of death!

For Easter Wednesday

[N.15] Agni paschalis esu

With upright manners all Christian souls carry themselves worthy of the food of the Paschal lamb and His drink, for whom Heseif the Highest Priest did offer Himself as victim to God.

Their forehead is marked with His Sacred Blood, just as once on the doorposts, and guarded against Canopic slaughter: Their bloody enemies were overwhelmed in the Red Sea.

Let them gird their reins to modesty: Let them guard their feet against adders and let them bear alway spiritual staves against dogs in their hands, that they might follow the Passion of Jesus, Who returned as victor from the depths.

Behold, the world, restored to life with its apparel, rising together with Christ, admonisheth the faithful, who after His death will live better with Him.

For Easter Thursday

[N.16] Grates salvatori ac

May all dwellers on these islands return thanks to their Saviour and King, Christ and God, Whom they have long awaited and now receive, and may they seek after His Laws with ready hearts, whom He chose when He abandoned the Jewish race, sprung from Abraham's flesh, and made them the sons of Abraham through faith and His kindred through His holy blood.

O Christ, brother of the same blood to our nature, assist Thou us, and by Thy divine power guard Thou us from every ambush and assault of the enemy: whom Thou didst make sport with the bait of Thy flesh on the hook of Thy Majesty, o Son of God!

Thou art risen. Thou rulest, no more to die.

Thou art risen. Thou hast made our mortal and earthly nature incorruptible and hast raised it to the heavens.

The whole globe singeth praises all-where to God – the globe that hath been freed without charge by the Highest Father’s indulgence: Who, taking pity because human kind was fallen into the old trap, sent hither His Son on earth, so that, with His right hand, He might raise those cast down in the dirt to the sky and restore them to their Fatherland.

Thus He, planted in the womb of an inviolate mother, lived here, the only Man free from blot and without deceit: the serpent that gave ill counsel to Adam spoiled Him not with guile; but rather, seeking greedily the bait of His flesh, was tricked by God’s hook and vanquished for ever.

Therefore do ye all, on whom the prince of this age hath inflicted what him pleaseth and whom he hath undone, cleave to this Man, in Whom he found nothing of his own! For those that cleave to Him he can in no wise undo!

Let us sing thanks now and for ever to the All-powerful Redeemer!

For Easter Saturday

[N.18] Carmen suo dilecto

Let the Church of Christ sing a song to her Beloved – the Church for whom God, forsaking father and mother, did clothe Himself in our nature and spit out the synagogue!

O Christ, from Thy sacred side flowed her Sacraments: with the support of Thy Cross is she kept on the sea of this age.

Out of love for Thy spouse Thou art shut up at Gaza, but will break down its gates: to pluck her from her enemies Thou didst contend with Goliath the tyrant, laying him low with one little cobble.

Behold, o Christ, Thy whole Church disporteth herself in peace under Thy lovely vine.

Thou Who art risen in the garden, o Christ, unlockest for Thy people the garden, long barred to them, of burgeoning Paradise, o Lord, King of Kings.

This is the holy Solemnity of Solemnities, emblazoned by Christ's triumph: Who defeated the empire of the devil that worketh evil, plucking us from his power with His precious blood.

Therefore, let us that are redeemed thank our Redeemer!

King of Kings, o Christ, Whom choirs of angels ever attend, do Thou in Thy kindness look gently upon men that are zealous in Thy praises, by whose deaths Thou wert moved, and Thou didst so humble Thyself as to suffer death!

Thou didst vanquish the laws of hell and, rising again, dost triumph: Thou, after the Cross, rulest unto the ends of the earth, the All-powerful Son of God.

Together let us beseech the Judge Who looketh into us, Who searcheth the hidden places of the heart, that we might shew our consciences pure before Him!

O long-suffering God, Thou Who art just, gentle and to be feared: Thou desirest more to spare the penitent than that he should be beaten.

Thou art not gratified by the death of those that must die, but Thou raisest them to life.

Nor dost Thou rejoice, o God, in the loss of those that hasten toward the Styx.

For Thy citizens the angels there is joy in the sinner that punisheth his own crimes.

That even Thy littlest one should perish is, I believe, displeasing in Thy sight.

Do Thou keep us ever from all evil, o God, o Judge Who art just, that when Thou comest to render to all deeds their deserts, Thou shouldst not have to punish us but to reward!

For the Third Sunday after Easter

[N.21] Laus tibi sit

Praise be to Thee, o God Who art faithful, Who confoundest never those that confide in Thee, but rather glorifiest them!

Thou art our Fortress against the attacks and ambushes of our enemies.

Our Shepherd, Thou Who dost burst the snare, Thou keepest those that fear Thee, bestowing on them delight that is very great, o God.

For the Fourth Sunday after Easter

[N.22] En regnator caelestium

Behold the Sovereign over those that dwell in the heavens and the earth, the Mighty Victor over the kingdoms of hell, the Ruler of Angels sitting upon His throne of honour, looking with kindness upon the toils of men, the Pitier of those that fear the nod of His power.

Therefore the whole world clappeth its hands, lifteth its voice, raiseth a song – leaping for joy before the Ruler of All Ages.

With cheerful hearts let us sing to our God, Who, when His Church is become weak in her sins, reneweth her alway, and, although a pale little thing, lighteth her with the radiance of the True Sun, and hath brought her out from the fiery ovens of the land of Mesraim: and Who in every trial heareth her, moreover sustaineth her with heavenly bread and teacheth her His worship!

Indeed He satisfieth her with sweet honey from the rock.

Let us adorn the triumph of the Highest King with praise, Who hath vanquished the rule of hell and wieldeth the sceptre over heaven and earth, Who hath given Himself for our redemption at a price of great value!

This name besuiteth Him... Idithun: For He o'erleapt with vigour all the mountains and hills of Bethel.

He gave a leap from heaven into a virgin's womb, thence into the sea of our age.

After He had pacified it with His power, He sprang against the foul shadows of the Fiery Stream.

When He hath cast down the empire of that prince and hath plucked countless standards from his grasp, He visiteth the world anew with His radiance, and, the Victor, hath led with Him what was captive and detained therein, and hath shewn Himself, restored to life, to His own, His servants and His friends.

Today at last had He given the greatest leap, flying o'er heavens and clouds in His headlong course.

Therefore, let those that believe celebrate this day, those whose sickly bodies Idithun hath borne in His own to heaven's high seats, the Son of God, that trembling they might await the advent of their Judge, as the two angels did teach the brethren: This Jesus that was taken up from you into heaven will come again, as ye have seen Him!

Now let us all beseech our Idithun with zealous voices, that He who sitteth at the right hand of the Father might send us the Holy Spirit, and may He-self be ever with us, to the end of this age!

For Ascension Day

[N.25] Christus hunc diem

May Christ give this day to be joyful for all Christians, for those who love Him!

O Christ Jesus, Son of God, mediator between our nature and the divine: As Eternal God thou didst visit the earth, as New Man thou fliest through the air.

Angels and Clouds press Thee around with their service, because Thou willst return to the Father.

But what wonder, since, when still a suckling, a star served Thee – and angels!

Today, o Lord, Thou hast given to earth-dwelling men reason that is new and sweet to hope for the heavenly, when Thou didst raise Thyself as Man, not figment, beyond the courses of the stars, o Lord of Kings.

How much joy filleth Thy apostles, to whom Thou didst grant to behold Thy progress though the heavens!

How happily in the heavens do the nine orders meet Thee, carrying on Thy shoulders the one flock long scattered by the wolves!

O Christ, Good Shepherd, disdain Thou not to guard this flock!

For Ascension Sunday

[N.26] O quam mira

O how marvellous are Thy portents, o God: Thou Who hast made the one scorned by his own and hated by others to be loved and feared greatly by both, from the famine he had predicted and the distribution of grain!

For the sake of his youngest brother he was known to his brethren through a vessel of silver.

May he lead us, now that Pharaoh is dead, to the land of our promised sojourn!

May the grace of the Holy Spirit be with us, that He might make our hearts His dwelling place, driving therefrom every spiritual vice!

O Spirit that cherisheth, Enlightener of men: do Thou cleanse for us the bristling shadows of our minds!

O Holy Lover of ever sensible thought: do Thou pour out for us, o Merciful One, Thy ointment upon our senses!

Thou, o Spirit, the Purifier of all that is shameful, do Thou purify for us the eye of our inner man, that we might glimpse the Highest Father, Whom only the eyes of a clean heart might behold!

Thou didst breathe into the prophets, that they proclaimed the glorious proclamation of Christ: Thou didst strengthen the apostles, that they might carry the trophy of Christ the whole world o'er.

When God, by His Word, did make the fabric of heaven, earth and sea, Thou didst spread Thy power upon the waters, to warm them, o Spirit.

By quickening souls Thou makest fruitful the waters: With Thy breath Thou bestowest what is spiritual upon men.

Thou hast united, o Lord, a world that is divided by tongue and usage, calling back idolaters to the service of God, o Best of Teachers.

Therefore, be Thou gracious to hear our supplication, o Holy Spirit, without Whom we believe all prayer vain and unworthy to reach the ears of God!

Thou Who didst teach the saints of every age with the embrace of the impulse of Thy power, o Spirit, by giving today the apostles of Christ a gift both unwonted and from all ages hid, hast Thou brought glory to this day.

For Trinity Sunday

[N.28] Benedicto gratias Deo

Let us return thanks to the Blessed God, we who are blessed by His sacred hand and signed with the consecration of His fingers.

Who didst make anew earth-dwelling men, when we were lost, through Thy only Son, o Holy Father, giving true life to death – Who disdained not to put on our nature, o Christ, and didst bring it for the sins of man to Thy Father as an acceptable sacrifice – o Most Holy Spirit, of Father and Son, true forgiveness of all our sins, and restitution of full innocence, and bestower of uncommon sanctity: To Thee, o Creator Father, be sovereignty – to Thee, o Redeemer Jesus Christ, be kingdom – to the Spirit, Sanctifier and Enlightener of Hearts, be everlasting power!

Richard L. Hewitt
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Kamuzu Academy, Malawi
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