

Vision of Peace

The Way of the Monk

Gregorian Chant

from Ampleforth Abbey



alto

Vision of Peace

The Way of the Monk – Gregorian Chant from Ampleforth Abbey

[1]	Ringin of the Great Bell	2:38
[2]	<i>Tibi dixit cor meum</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:43
[3]	<i>Laetatus sum</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:51
[4]	<i>Suscipe</i> (Gregorian chant)	3:20
[5]	<i>Veni Creator Spiritus</i> (Gregorian chant)	3:05
[6]	<i>Ubi caritas "Where charity and love are found"</i> (Dom Alexander McCabe)	2:08
[7]	<i>Inclitos Christi</i> (12th c. chant)	2:44
[8]	<i>Benedictus Deus</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:40
[9]	<i>Ave Maris Stella</i> (Gregorian chant)	2:55
[10]	<i>The Reading from the Rule of St. Benedict and the Confession</i> (Gregorian chant)	3:29
[11]	<i>The Psalms of Compline</i> (Dom Laurence Bévenot)	5:30
[12]	<i>The Hymn at Nightfall</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:15
[13]	<i>The Verse - Nunc Dimittis</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:51
[14]	<i>Litany, Prayer and Blessing</i> (Gregorian chant)	2:15
[15]	<i>Hymn to the Virgin Mary</i> (10th c. chant)	2:47
[16]	<i>Scriptural Meditation</i> (19th c. Cassinese chant)	5:10
[17]	<i>Quinque prudentes Virgines</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:16
[18]	<i>De lamentatione Jeremiae Prophetiae</i> (Gregorian chant)	3:37
[19]	<i>Christus factus est</i> (Gregorian chant)	2:23
[20]	<i>Te Deum</i> (Gregorian chant dating from the 5th c.)	4:03
[21]	<i>Miserere mei</i> (Gregorian chant)	5:28
[22]	<i>Regem cui</i> (Gregorian chant)	6:14
[23]	<i>Ego Sum - In Paradisum - Chorus Angelorum</i> (Gregorian chant)	1:54
[24]	<i>Suscipe - Urbs Jerusalem beata</i> (Gregorian chant)	3:15

Monks of Ampleforth Abbey

Dom Benjamin O'Sullivan, *choirmaster*

Dom Laurence McTaggart, *organ*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sources of the Chant: Gregorian chant is sung today by monks and nuns all over the world, as it has been for the past 1500 years. It goes back even further than that to the song of the Jewish synagogue at the time of Christ, and beyond. It is called "Gregorian" after St. Gregor the Great, a disciple of St. Benedict, who collected the music and encouraged the chant in the sixth century. As the Roman Empire crumbled, the people of Britain were slipping back into chaos and paganism. When Gregory was elected Pope, he sent Augustine and some forty monks to re-establish Christianity in England. They landed in Kent and founded the great monastery of St. Peter and the Cathedral of Christ Church in Canterbury. Over the next thousand years, many men and women chose to follow Christ by living according to the Rule of St. Benedict in monasteries up and down the land. Then Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries, confiscated their lands and dispersed the monks and nuns. For nearly three hundred years, monks and nuns were banished from Britain and had to live in exile in Europe. The descendants of the monks of the great Abbey at Westminster ended up at Dieulouard in France. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, persecution in France forced them back to England. In 1802 eight monks arrived at Ampleforth to establish a monastery and open a school. So the monks of Ampleforth recall their descent over 1000 years from the monks of Westminster. In past centuries, they have endured war, revolution and even martyrdom. For the last 200 years they have lived, worked and prayed in Yorkshire. The monks of Ampleforth have taken up again the ancient tradition of Gregorian chant, reviving its local English variants, and even adding their own compositions.

The Music of the Chant: Gregorian chant is the earliest form of Western music, though it differs from its modern descendants in a number of ways that have a profound effect on the singer and the listener. It uses a different set of scales, creating sounds and intervals that are strange to the modern ear. The song is continuous and fluent without pause or sense of regular metrical beat. It flows in a single melody without any added harmony or musical elaboration, though an organ is sometimes used to support the voices.

It is this strangeness and simplicity that strikes the modern ear. It carries the listener and singer to another level, to a simpler world. This is why the chant can touch the heart and alleviate the anxieties of people today. The chant is the servant of the sacred text whose meaning and importance shapes. For the Christian believer the combination of text and chant has a clear meaning and deep power in prayer and worship. The chant is a song celebrating and exploring the holy place where God dwells; and its evocative power can bring anyone to the borders of this place of light and rest.

– Dom Justin Price, Prior of Ampleforth (1995)

THE MONK'S JOURNEY

... to The Heavenly City – his call, life, death, and burial: The chants in this recording by the monks of Ampleforth are an integral part of their life and prayer. Most of the pieces are beautiful examples of ancient Latin Gregorian chant, some are sung in English to chants composed by monks of today. They witness to the continuing vitality of the spiritual tradition of the monks of St. Benedict. The first five pieces belong to the early period of a monk's life, when he hears God's call and after a time of testing and deliberation responds to it by making his monastic vows. These are followed by sixteen more that reflect different aspects of the daily prayer of the monastic community. Finally we hear some of the music surrounding the death and burial of a monk. The recording ends with a hymn celebrating the heavenly Jerusalem, where God dwells. The monks work and pray with this end in view; to be made ready to live therewith all God's people. This hope, God's vision of peace, sustains them in their daily lives.

The Call

The Great Bell: The bell hangs in the tower high above the sanctuary of the monastery church, its voice calls the monks together for prayer and worship – to drop whatever they are doing and make their way to the church to take up their most important work, what St. Benedict calls 'the Work of God'. Every day the sound of the bell renews God's call to the monk and draws him into the power of this presence.

Tibi dixit cor meum: Introit Ps 26: 8, 9 & 1

My heart hath said to thee: My face hath sought thee, O Lord will I seek. Turn not away thy face from me. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

Laetatus sum: Gradual Ps 121: 1, 7

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

During his first year in the monastery the would-be monk counts the cost of setting out along this new path. He finds that he does not have to walk alone. He joins a community and is accompanied by others called to make the same journey.

Guides who have travelled this road before are there to point the way. If at the end of a year he is ready, he can commit himself to monastic vows that last for three years. After that time, he is able to make vows that bind him for life. He can keep none of these vows if he relies on his own strength. The monk's vows are made out of love for God who has first loved him. This is what the chant *Tibi dixit cor meum* proclaims. He also makes his vows as a member of a community that has recognized the authenticity of his

monastic vocation and joyfully accepted him as a brother.

Suscipe: Ps 118/119 v. 116

On the day of his vows, the monk approaches the community gathered round the altar of the abbey church. As he comes up the aisle and climbs the steps he sings this verse three times. Each time the community repeats it in support.

Uphold me Lord according to thy promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope.

Veni Creator Spiritus: 10th Century hymn To the Holy Spirit

Melody in the English tradition from the Benedictine cathedral priory of Ely.

As the new brother makes his vows, the monks pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will continue to renew the community and the world: *Veni, Creator Spiritus – Come Creator Spirit, the living spring, the living fire, abundance of God's own love. The community is sustained, healed and strengthened by this love, It is this – not the silence of the cloister nor the soothing effect of the chant, but the living presence of God among them – that is the source of the peace of monastic life.*

Daily Life

Where charity and love are found... English translation of the 'Ubi Caritas'

This chant, sung as the Abbot washes the feet of his monks on Maundy Thursday, recalls the action of Christ at the Last Supper. God is always faithful and remains with the monks in every difficulty and distress, as long as they humbly serve him in each other and remain united in their love. "Where charity and love are found, there is God."

Inclitos Christi A Hymn sung on the Feast days of Monastic Saints. 12th Century.

Plainchant melody in the English tradition from the medieval abbey at Barking.

A monastery is a centre of stability and continuity, where monks live according to the practical wisdom of past generations, and hand it on enriched to their successors. The monks of today live by faith in the presence of God. The holy monks of the past see him face to face in heaven. He draws the living and the dead together into his presence. In the hymn the monks praise their predecessors and thank them for their prayers. We sing of glorious servants of Christ whom, for their clear faith and shining deeds, On this day the earth, joining with heaven, honours with praises.

Benedictus Deus: 2 Corinthians 1:2-5

A Passage of Scripture sung daily during the community's evening prayer:

Blessed be the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies

and God of all comfort: who comforteth us in all our affliction. Thanks be to God. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The monks sing this chant on most days of the year. Their first response is 'Deo gratias' "Thanks be to God" for everything – for what they have just heard, for the wisdom it teaches, for the presence of God in their lives, for his strength, and for giving them the means to comfort and encourage others. Then they sing 'I will bless the Lord at all times'. At all times, continually – for a monk's life, like anyone else's, is for the most part a humdrum round of daily tasks. He learns to find God and his glory among ordinary things. Peace is the fruit of finding him there.

Ave Maris Stella: Hymn sung on Feast Days of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ninth century Melody in the English tradition from the Benedictine cathedral priory at Ely.)

Daily life brings its knocks and bruises. Monks turn in prayer to Mary the mother of Jesus and of monks: *(Show yourself our mother. May he accept through you Our prayers, who for our sake Bore to be born of you)* (v.4)

The End of the Day

At the end of every day, the monks gather for night prayer. They begin by reflecting on their faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ and to the Rule of St. Benedict, and by asking forgiveness for their failures and sins. The psalms, hymns and prayers that follow express their trust and confidence as they place themselves under God's protection.

The Reading of the Rule of St. Benedict and the Confession:

- **The Psalms of Compline:** Psalms 4, 90/91, 133/134
- **The hymn at Nightfall:** From the Office of Compline
- **The Verse:** From the Office of Compline

The Nunc Dimittis: From the Office of Compline

Simeon, a holy man in Jerusalem when Christ was born, spoke these words when he held the child Jesus in his arms.

The Litany, The Prayer and the Abbot's Blessing: From the Office of Compline

The Hymn to the Virgin Mary: From the Office of Compline

Salve Regina: Antiphon from the tenth century

At the end of Compline each day, the monks turn towards the figure of Mary holding the child Jesus, once more asking for her prayers.

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.

(Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy, hail our life our sweetness and our hope.)

Scriptural meditation: Grace and Peace in Christ: Philippians 1:3-11 Sung

to 19th Century Cassinese tone

After Compline the monks leave the church and go to their cells. The Great Silence begins – time for them to be alone, to pray and to meditate upon the Scriptures, as well as to rest. The solitude of the night is an especially good time to remember and pray for family and friends, and for all those who claim a place in the heart.

A reading from the epistle of the blessed apostle Paul to the Philippians, Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart: in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defense of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgement; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Quinque prudentes virgins: Matthew 25: 4,6

(Communion antiphon on feasts of holy virgins.)

The night hours are also a time when the monk keeps solitary vigil for the coming of Christ the beloved.

Media autem nocte clamor factus est: Ecce sponsus venit: exite obviam Christo Domino.

(At midnight there was a cry: "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out and meet him, Christ the Lord")

De lamentation Ieremiae prophetae: Sung at Matins on Good Friday Lamentations 2: 8-11

In the hours before dawn the monks gather in the abbey church to listen to readings from the sacred scriptures and to ponder over them. The changing of the Lamentations on Good Friday brings before them the pain of the world as it awaits the healing and salvation brought by Christ.

Christus Factus est: Philippians 2: 8-11

At the end of the Lamentations, the chant '*Christus factus est*' reveals the hidden power of Christ's suffering and death by which all the world's

suffering, injustice and evil will be overcome and his kingdom finally established on earth.

Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Propter quod et Deus exultavit illum et dedit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen. (Christ became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.)

Te Deum: Early 5th Century Hymn

This is the great Christian hymn of praise to God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The monks sing it every Sunday morning. It sums up the purpose of the life of each one and of the whole community.

Te Deum Laudamus, te Dominum confitemur. (We praise thee, O God, we acclaim thee as the Lord.)

DEATH AND BURIAL

The death of a monk brings a certain sadness to his monastic brethren. It is like losing a member of the family. But the grief is tempered by the sure hope that the dead brother now shares in Christ's kingdom. In his rule for monks, St. Benedict says:

As we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love. Never swerving from his instructions. But faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom. Amen.

The monks can still help their brother in the final stages of his journey to God by praying for him.

Miserere mei: Ps 50-51

As his body is brought into the church on the night before his burial, they sing the 'Miserere'. It begins:

Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam, et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam.

(Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.)

Regem cui: Opening Psalm at the dirge for a dead monk. Ps 94/95

Later that night, the monks gather to sing a 'Dirge' for the dead monk. They begin their prayer for him by calling all creation to worship Christ the source of life.

Regem cui omnia vivunt. Venite adoremus.

(Come let us adore the King in whom all things find life)

Ego Sum: Antiphon John 11: 25,26

At dawn the next morning, their prayers continue with the singing of the

chant *Ego sum*, recalling Christ's promise of eternal life to those who believe in him.

Ego sum resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, etiam si mortuus fuerit, vivet: et omnis qui vivit et credit in me non morietur in aeternum.

(I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.)

In Paradisum: Chorus Angelorum Recessional antiphons

Later in the day the Abbot offers a Requiem Mass for the dead monk. Now his brethren have done for him everything that they can do. At the end of the Mass the monks carry the body in procession to the grave. They hand their brother over to the care of the heavenly procession waiting to greet him and lead him to Christ.

In paradisum deducant te angeli: in tuo adventus suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat et cum Lazaro quondam pauper aeternam habeas requiem.

(May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs welcome you and lead you into the heavenly city of Jerusalem. May the choirs of angels receive you, and with Lazarus, once so poor, may you find eternal rest.)

Suscipe: Ps 118/119 v 116

As the body is lowered into the grave, the bell tolls and the community sings the last chant, repeating the words sung by the monk when first he made his vows.

Suscipe me Domine secundum eloquium tuum et vevam, et non confundas me ab expectatione mea.

(Uphold me, Lord, according to the word, that I may live: and let me not be put to shame in my hope.)

THE HEAVENLY CITY

Urbs Ierusalem beata: Hymn for the dedication of a church

Early 8th century. Sung to an ancient melody in the English tradition from Salisbury. St. Benedict urges his monks to live in simplicity and harmony as did the first Christians in Jerusalem.

Urbs Ierusalem beata, Dicta pacis visio, Quae construitur in caelis Vivis ex lapidibus, Et Angelis coronate, Ut sponsata comite.

(Jerusalem, blessed city, Called the vision of peace, For she is built in heaven Out of living stone, And crowned by the angels, As, by friends, a bride.)



Alto ALC1322

5055354413223

Recorded at Ampleforth Abbey, Yorkshire, England

[3], [7], [9], [11], [12]-[15], [18], [19], [21]-[23] recorded April 1994

Producer: **John H. West**

Engineer **Andy Thompkins**

Tracks [1], [2], [4]-[6], [8], [10], [16], [17], [20], [24] recorded April 1995

Producer and editor: **Nick Morgan & Mike Jeffries**

Mastered for ALTO by **Paul Arden-Taylor**

Digital edition produced by **Gene Gaudette**, Urlicht AudioVisual

Cover images: 'Row of Stepping Stones' © **Robert Davies**, dreamstime
and 'Old Bell' © **Georg Henrik Lehnerer**, dreamstime

Design produced by **Imergent Images Ltd**

Reissue producer: **Robin Vaughan**

©&© 2016, Musical Concepts. All rights reserved.

Digital edition ©&© 2016, 2025, Musical Concepts. All rights reserved.

Released under license from MNRK Music Group.

No part of this sound recording and its component audio, text, or graphics files may be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, or shared electronically in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, file sharing, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, contact the publisher, using the subject line "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

Musical Concepts
c/o ALTO Distribution
Magnus House
8 Ashfield Rd
Cheadle SK81BB, UK

alto