

VICTORIA ASCENDENS

Tomás Luis de Victoria *Missae Ascendens Christus* Motets Through The Liturgical Year

Chantry

David Taylor, Music Director

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Track 1

Ascendens Christus

Prima pars
Ascendens Christus in altum, alleluia,
captivam duxit captivitatem, alleluia,
* dedit dona hominibus, alleluia.

Secunda pars
Ascendit Deus in jubilatione,
et Dominus in voce tubae, alleluia:
* dedit dona hominibus, alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

(1548-1611)

First part
When Christ ascended on high, alleluia,
he led captivity captive, alleluia,
* and gave gifts unto men, alleluia.

Second part
God is gone up with a shout,
and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, alleluia:
*and gave gifts unto men, alleluia.

Ephesians 4:8, Psalm 46:5. Responsory at Matins on the Feast
of the Ascension of Our Lord in the Roman Rite

Tracks 2, 3

Missae Ascendens Christus

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Filius unigenite, Jesu Christe;
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Glory be to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will towards men.
We praise thee. We bless thee.
We adore thee. We glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus; tu solus Dominus;
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe;
cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord;
thou only art most high, Jesus Christ;
with the Holy Ghost,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Ordinary of the Mass in the Roman Rite

Track 4

Ecce Dominus veniet

Prima pars
Ecce Dominus veniet,
et omnes sancti ejus cum eo, alleluia:
* et erit in die illa lux magna, alleluia.

Secunda pars
Ecce apparebit Dominus super nubem candidam,
et cum eo sanctorum millia, alleluia:
* et erit in die illa lux magna, alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

First part
Behold, the Lord cometh,
and all his saints with him, alleluia:
* and in that day there shall be a great light, alleluia.

Second part
Behold, the Lord shall appear upon a white cloud,
and ten thousand of his saints with him, alleluia:
* and in that day there shall be a great light, alleluia.

Zechariah 14:5, Jude 1:14. Sixteenth Century Responsory at
Matins for the Second Sunday of Advent in the Roman Rite

Track 5

O magnum mysterium

O magnum mysterium
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderunt Dominum natum,
jacentum in praesepe.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera
meruerunt portare Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia.

O great mystery
and wondrous sacrament,
that beasts should behold the newborn Lord
lying in a manger.
O blessed Virgin, whose womb
hast merited to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

From a Responsory at Matins for the Feast of the Nativity
of Our Lord in the Roman Rite

Track 6

Magi viderunt stellam

Magi viderunt stellam,
qui dixerunt ad invicem,
"Hoc signum magni Regis est;
eamus et inquiramus eum,
et offeramus ei munera,
aurum, thus et myrrham." Alleluia.

The Magi beheld the star,
who said unto themselves,
"This is the sign of a great King;
let us go and inquire after him,
and offer unto him gifts,
gold, frankincense and myrrh." Alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Antiphon for the Magnificat at First Vespers for
the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord in the Roman Rite

Track 7

O vos omnes

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,
attendite, et videte,
* si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

Attendite, universi populi,
et videte dolorem meum;
* si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

O all ye that pass by in the way,
behold, and see,
* if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

Behold, all ye people,
and see my sorrow;
* if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

Responsory at Matins for Holy Saturday in the
Roman Rite (based in part on Lamentations 1:12)

Track 8

Surrexit pastor bonus

Surrexit Pastor bonus,
qui animam suam posuit pro ovibus suis,
et pro grege suo mori dignatus est.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

The Good Shepherd hath arisen,
who laid down his life for his sheep,
and for his flock vouchsafed to die.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

From a Responsory at Matins for Easter Monday in the
Roman Rite (based in part on John 10:11)

Tracks 9, 10, 11, 12

Missa Ascendens Christus

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilem omnium et invisibilem:
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei Unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula;
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri,
consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt;
qui propter nos homines
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de caelis,
et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine,
et homo factus est;
crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato;
passus, et sepultus est;
et resurrexit tertia die,
secundum Scripturas,
et ascendit in caelum,
sedet at dexteram Patris;
et iterum venturus est cum gloria
judicare vivos et mortuos;
cujus regni non erit finis:
Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem;
Dominum et vivificantem;
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit;

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible:
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds;
God of God, light of light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men
and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again,
according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again with glory
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end:
And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost,
the Lord and giver of life;
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,

qui cum Patre et Filio
simul adoratur et conglorificatur;
qui locutus est per prophetas.
Et unam, sanctam, catholicam, et
apostolicam Ecclesiam:
Confiteor unum baptismum
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth;
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua:
Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini:
Osanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

who with the Father and the Son
together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the prophets:
And I believe one, holy, catholic, and
apostolic Church:
I acknowledge one baptism
for the remission of sins:
And I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Hosts;
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory:
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:
Hosanna in the highest.

O Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world:
have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

Ordinary of the Mass in the Roman Rite

Track 13

Domine, non sum dignus

Prima pars
Domine, non sum dignus,
ut intres sub tectum meum:
sed tantum dic verbo,
et sanabitur anima mea.

Secunda pars
Miserere mei, quoniam infirmus sum:
sana me, Domine, et sanabor.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

First part
Lord, I am not worthy
that thou shouldst come under my roof:
but speak the word only,
and my soul shall be healed.

Second part
Have mercy upon me, for I am weak:
heal me, O Lord, and make me whole.

Ephesians 4:8, Psalm 6:3. Prayer at the Communion in the
Ordinary of the Mass in the Roman Rite.

Track 14

Ego sum panis vivus

Ego sum panis vivus qui de caelo descendi:
si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane,
vivet in aeternum:
et panis quem ego dabo
caro mea est pro mundi vita. Alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

I am the living bread, which came down from heaven:
if any man eat of this bread,
he shall live for ever:
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world. Alleluia:

John 6:51. From a sixteenth century Responsory at Matins
for the Feast of Corpus Christi in the Roman Rite

Track 15

Dum complerentur dies Pentecostes

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Prima pars

Dum complerentur dies Pentecostes,
erant omnes pariter,
dicentes Alleluia:
et subito factus est sonus de coelo, alleluia,
* tamquam spiritus vehementis,
et replevit totam domum. Alleluia.

Secunda pars

Dum ergo essent in unum discipuli
congregati propter metum Judaeorum,
sonus repente de coelo venit super eos, alleluia,
* tamquam spiritus vehementis,
et replevit totam domum. Alleluia.

First part

When the day of Pentecost was fully come,
they were all with one accord in one place,
saying Alleluia:
and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, alleluia,
as of a rushing, mighty wind,
and it filled all the house. Alleluia.

Second part

When therefore the disciples were gathered together
in one for fear of the Jews,
a sound from heaven came upon them, alleluia,
as of a rushing, mighty wind,
and it filled all the house. Alleluia

Acts 2:1-2. Responsory at Matins for Whitsunday
in the Roman Rite

THE COMPOSER AND THE MUSIC

Tomás Luis de Victoria, the best-known of Spain's Renaissance composers, is generally regarded as one of the greatest of all 16th century composers of sacred music. After serving as a choirboy at the cathedral of Avila, Victoria studied and sang at the Jesuit College in Rome, where he later was ordained a priest, and spent twenty years as Master of the Musicians and teacher of music. He also joined the community founded by Saint Filippo Neri. After returning to Spain, he served as chaplain and choirmaster to the dowager empress Maria at the Royal Convent of the Barefoot Clarist Nuns, where he led a notable choir of priests and boy choristers. Many of his most famous works date from this period. Although Victoria employs polyphonic techniques used by other Renaissance masters such as Palestrina, one can hear in many of his works a characteristically Spanish emotional intensity, perhaps not surprising in a younger contemporary of mystics such as St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross.

This concert is the third in Chantry's ongoing Victoria series, which began in the group's 2006-2007 season with an acclaimed performance of the composer's great *Requiem*. During the 2007-2008 season, Chantry sang Victoria's Marian music for eight-part double choir, including the *Missa Salve Regina*, the composer's settings of the four Marian Antiphons, and his eight-part settings of the *Ave Maria* and the *Magnificat*. Tonight's concert features some of Victoria's greatest music for four-part and five-part choir. Chantry intends to explore the rest of Victoria's works in succeeding seasons.

Victoria's *Missa Ascendens Christus* is what musicologists now call a "parody Mass", although the term "Missa ad imitationem" or "imitation Mass" would have been more familiar to Renaissance composers. It was common practice for Renaissance pieces to be based in some fashion on musical material from other works. One way of composing such a work was to use a preexisting melody or cantus firmus, perhaps from plainchant, in one or more of the polyphonic voices of a new composition. When a composer employed parody technique, however, his new piece would absorb multiple aspects of a preexisting composition, including its themes, rhythms, and harmonies, either in unaltered form or subject to free variation. The result was music featuring a fusion of old and new elements. (In this context, the term "parody" does not imply humor as it does in modern usage.) The esteem bestowed during the Renaissance on the skill of combining of the old and the new is quite different from, for example, the 19th century Romantic period's preference for originality as an artistic virtue. Sixteenth century composers were particularly fond of parody technique, and often employed it in composing Masses that could be based on either sacred motets or secular madrigals.

The *Missa Ascendens Christus* is based on Victoria's motet *Ascendens Christus*. The joyful, brilliant music of this famous five-voiced motet, printed five times in Victoria's lifetime, reflects the jubilation of the text, which is reflected in strong rising phrases and ringing Alleluias. The *Missa* absorbs all of the motet's musical material, including the

ascending motive Victoria gives to the word *ascendens*. It also retains the five-voiced texture of the motet, which features two soprano parts, but also employs sections for four voices in varying choral and solo combinations, including the *Christe eleison* (SSAT), *Domine Deus* (SSAB), *Crucifixus* and *Et resurrexit* (SSAT), and *Benedictus* (SATB). The remarkable Agnus Dei is in six parts (SSATTB). In a compositional tour-de-force, the Agnus Dei's second treble, alto, and first tenor parts are in canon (strict imitation, like a round), which Victoria's score labels *trinitas in unitate*. As this *Missa* and Victoria's other Masses show, Victoria (perhaps the greatest of all priest-composers) clearly regarded the Mass as something happy and often jubilant. While there are moments of quiet adoration or contemplation, it is noteworthy that Victoria never chose to base a Mass on sad or penitential motets, but always on music of a joyful nature.

The other motets on this evening's program, which include some of Victoria's most famous works as well as others seldom performed, take us on a tour through the major seasons and feasts of the Christian liturgical year.

Ecce Dominus veniet, a five-part motet for the Advent season which opens the year, focuses on Advent's anticipation of Christ's return. From its ringing exhortation *Ecce* (behold) to its joyful polyphonic alleluias, its music is closely aligned with the text, notably at the dramatic, homophonic presentation of the words *lux magna* (great light). In ***O magnum mysterium***, one of the best known and most beloved of all Renaissance Christmas works, Victoria skilfully alternates polyphony and homophony and makes expressive use of two-part, three-part, and four-part textures as the music expresses the wonder that even the animals behold the Infant in the manger. After a wonderful hush as Victoria musically caresses *O beata Virgo*, alleluias dance in triple time before cascading phrases bring the piece to a joyful conclusion. The music of the four-part Epiphany motet ***Magi viderunt stellam***, which tells the story of the Wise Men, is also full of Renaissance musical rhetoric, from the rising phrase as the Magi look up and see the star, to the quicker motion of *eamus* (let us go), and the falling fifth following by a rising motive at *et offeramus* as the sages bow and then lift up their three gifts.

The characteristically Spanish emotional intensity that suffuses many of Victoria's works is perhaps nowhere more evident than in his famous Holy Week motet ***O vos omnes***. With nothing more than a simple four-part texture and expressive use of suspension dissonances resolving into consonance, Victoria distills the overwhelming sorrow of the Passion story into music of astonishing dramatic power. The six-part motet ***Surrexit pastor bonus*** no less skillfully portrays the joy of Easter, from its upward-leaping motive for *surrexit* (has risen) to the hushed homophony of *mori dignatus est* (vouchsafed to die) to its pealing *alleluia* conclusion.

Domine non sum dignus and ***Ego sum panis vivus*** were composed for the Feast of Corpus Christi, celebrating the institution of the Eucharist. *Domine non sum dignus* (Lord I am not worthy) is the prayer said by the celebrant immediately before communion is received. Victoria gives it a quiet, simple, four-part setting for alto, tenor and bass male voices, breaking into triple time at the words *et sanabitur anima mea* (and my soul shall be healed). The composer's mastery of polyphony is evident in the four-part ***Ego sum panis vivus***, which employs contrasting contrapuntal motives from the long-note theme for the opening text to the animated rising line given to *vivet in aeternum* (shall live forever) to the flowing *alleluia* duets at the motet's end.

Dum complerentur dies Pentecostes, written for the Feast of Pentecost celebrating the coming of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, was notably popular in Victoria's lifetime, being reprinted on numerous occasions by various publishers. It displays Victoria's consummate care to reflect the text in the music. After opening with a rich web of imitative entries, Victoria gives a homophonic texture to *erant omnes pariter* (all with one accord). Three dramatic repetitions of *et subito* (and suddenly) herald the startling sound from heaven at the arrival of the Holy Ghost, followed by powerful triple-rhythm emphasis for *tanquam spiritus vehementer* (mighty wind) and pealing polyphonic *alleluias*. The second part of the work again opens with counterpoint, breaking into homophony at the words *in unum discipuli congregati* (the disciples were gathered together in one), with running entries depicting the *sonus repente de coelo* (sound from heaven). The motet concludes with the return of the text and music of the respond (*tanquam spiritus vehementer*) and the same exhilarating *alleluia* peals, this time with the two soprano parts exchanged.