



Evensong

The Patronal Festival *of* St. Margaret's Convent Colombo



St. Margaret's Convent

Friday 19th July 2024
6.00 pm



St Margaret holding a palm in her raised left hand, a dragon at her right
by Italian Engraver Marcantonio Raimondi (c.1470/82 – c.1534)

St. Margaret of Antioch

In 303–4 the Emperor Diocletian began a persecution of Christians throughout the Roman Empire. The direct reason for the persecution is unknown, although there was an attempt to restore public morality and reinforce the imperial authority by ridding the Empire of a creed and organization which eroded its religious foundations. In the context of fourth-century Roman society, Christianity was seen as morally and socially disruptive.

In the Spring of 304 an edict was published which required pagan sacrifice to be offered on pain of death and confiscation of property. Margaret is reputed to have been martyred at Antioch in the Diocletian persecution. Nothing certain is known of her life or the manner of her death, although many legends have grown up surrounding her. She was honoured from a very early date in the Eastern Church, and then from the seventh century in the West.

Many of the legends which surround Margaret first appeared in the twelfth century. The most famous of these concerned her being swallowed by a dragon, and then bursting forth from its stomach. Somewhat perversely, she is the patron saint of childbirth. In the Late Middle Ages a cult surrounding her legend was popular, although it was suppressed by papal decree at a later date.

Although much of her life is clouded in mystery, and many of the legends beyond belief, Margaret is a reminder of the sacrifice that Christians made in the Early Church, and of the countless other unknown martyrs who have stood firm for Christ in the face of persecution and death.

Extract from *Saints on Earth: A biographical companion to Common Worship*
by John H Darch and Stuart K Burns

A Guide to Evensong

Evensong is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in history and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its secondary purpose is to evoke from the worshipper a response of praise, penitence, prayer and obedience.

Much of the service is sung by the choir. As the choir sings, we are provided with space for reflection, which allows us the freedom to participate in a silent, but equally direct way. In our busy lives and noisy world, the opportunity to be quiet and still, to meditate of God's word and be immersed in beauty, is a precious gift that increasing numbers of us treasure.

Please remain silent before the service

The Service is conducted by

Ven. Christopher Balraj

Vicar, St. Michael and All Angels

Sister Chandrani Peiris

Sister Superior, St. Margaret's Convent

Rev. Chintha Polgampola

Curate, St. Michael and All Angels

The Service is sung by

The Chapel Choir of Bishop's College, Colombo

The Organ is played by

Denham Pereira

Organist, St. Michael and All Angels

Music before the Service

Trumpet Tune in D

David Johnson (1922–87)

Benedictus No. 9 Op. 59

Max Reger (1873–1916)

Andante Tranquillo *from* 5 short pieces

Percy Whitlock (1909–46)

Order of Service

*The congregation is asked to join in all texts printed in **bold**.*

If you are unable to stand at any point during the service, please feel free to remain seated.

All stand as the servers, choir and clergy enter and gather at the West Door

The choir sings

Introit

Let him who seeks not cease seeking
until he finds, until he finds,
and when he finds, he shall be troubled,
and when he is troubled, let him marvel
and he shall rule over the All.

Words: Gospel of Thomas v.2

Music: Richard Shepherd (1949–2021)

All sing

Processional Hymn

during which the procession moves through the nave to the Sanctuary

**Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and corner-stone,
chosen of the Lord, and precious,
binding all the Church in one,
holy Sion's help for ever,
and her confidence alone.**

**All that dedicated city,
dearly loved of God on high,
in exultant jubilation
pours perpetual melody,
God the One in Three adoring
in glad hymns eternally**

**To this temple, where we call thee,
come, O Lord of hosts, today;
with thy wonted loving-kindness;
hear thy servants as they pray,
and thy fullest benediction
shed within its walls today.**

**Here vouchsafe to all thy servants
what they ask of thee to gain;
what they gain from thee, for ever
with the blessed to retain;
and hereafter in thy glory
evermore with thee to reign.**

**Laud and honour to the Father,
laud and honour to the Son,
laud and honour to the Spirit,
ever Three, and ever One,
One in love and One in splendour,
while unending ages run. Amen.**

Words: Latin, 7th-8th cent.
Tr. J. M. Neale (1818-66)

Tune: Westminster Abbey
Henry Purcell (1659-95)
Descant: Christopher Robinson (b.1936)

The officiant welcomes the congregation and introduces the confession

Prayers of Penitence

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of Almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and show forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all people such things as their well-being doth require. Wherefore let us kneel and keep silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

All kneel or sit and silence is kept

O God, our Father,
**we have sinned against thee
in thought, word, and deed;
we have not loved thee with all our heart;
we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.
Have mercy upon us, we beseech thee;
cleanse us from our sins;
and help us to overcome our faults;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The officiant gives the Absolution

May the almighty and merciful Lord
grant unto you pardon and remission of all your sins,
time for amendment of life,
and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

All stand

The Responses

sung by the choir

O Lord, open thou our lips;
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us;
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
*as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.*

Praise ye the Lord;
The Lord's name be praised.

Music: Peter Aston (b.1938)

All sit. The choir sings

Psalm 148

O praise the Lord of heaven:
 praise him in the height.
Praise him, all ye angels of his:
 praise him, all his host.
Praise him, sun and moon:
 praise him, all ye stars and light.
Praise him, all ye heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens.
Let them praise the Name of the Lord:
 for he spake the word, and they were made;
 he commanded, and they were created.
He hath made them fast for ever and ever:
 he hath given them a law which shall not be broken.
Praise the Lord upon earth:
 ye dragons, and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and vapours:
 wind and storm, fulfilling his word;
Mountains and all hills:
 fruitful trees and all cedars;
Beasts and all cattle:
 worms and feathered fowls;
Kings of the earth and all people:
 princes and all judges of the world;
Young men and maidens, old men and children,
praise the Name of the Lord:
 for his Name only is excellent,
 and his praise above heaven and earth.
He shall exalt the horn of his people:
 all his saints shall praise him
even the children of Israel:
 even the people that serveth him.

All stand

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

Chant: Sir David Willcocks (1919–2015)

All sit

The First Reading

read by

A past pupil of St. Margaret's Convent

A reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 2

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" -- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 2. 9-13

Thanks be to God

All stand to sing

Magnificat

The Song of Mary

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his Word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his Word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!**

Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

Tune: Woodlands
Walter Greatorex (1877–1949)

All sit

Second Lesson

read by

A member of Shanthi Nirwasa

A reading from the Gospel of John Chapter 15

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business.

Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

John 15: 9–17

Thanks be to God.

Silence is kept, after which all stand with the Choir

Nunc Dimittis
The Song of Simeon

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared
before the face of all people,
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

Music: Evening Service in D
Herbert Sumsion (1899–1995)

Remain standing

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The choir sings,

Responses

The Lord be with you
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray

All kneel

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

Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
And grant us thy salvation.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people;
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord;
Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us;
And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The officiant sings

Collect for the day

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
in her day, you gave our patron Margaret
great gifts for your service.
Help us in our time to be filled
with the same courage and love
that we may be faithful to our calling.
We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Collect for Peace

O God, from whom all holy desires,
all good counsels,
and all just works do proceed;
Give unto thy servants that peace
which the world cannot give;
that our hearts may be set to obey
thy commandments, and also that by thee, we,
being defended from the fear of our enemies,
may pass our time in rest and quietness;
through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

Collect for aid against perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us
from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Music: Peter Aston

Remain seated. The choir sings

Anthem

As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you.
Remain in my love.
This is my commandment:
that you love one another, as I have loved you.

God is love, and those who live in love.
God lives in them.

If you keep my commandments,
love one another, as I have loved you.
Then your joy will be complete.

Words: John 15: 19–22

Music: Simon Lole (b.1957)

Remain seated

Address

given by

Sister Chandrani, Sister Superior, St. Margaret's Convent

All stand to sing

Hymn

*during which a collection will be taken for the work and mission of
St. Margaret's Convent*

**Come, let us join the Church above
the martyr's praise to sing,
that virgin true who gave today
her life-blood for her King.**

**Today through heaven the cry rang out,
"Great God, the fight is done!
Room for the Victor! lo, her crown
Christ's valiant saint hath won!"**

**The martyr's triumph shall endure,
her fame time cannot dim:
see how she calls on one and all
to rise and follow him!**

**The cloud of witnesses look down,
they cheer us on to fight;
to God their prayers go up that he
may lead their friends aright.**

**Brave martyr, we will follow till
to God we yield our breath;
and learn from thee to spurn the world
and mock at pain and death!**

**To Christ, for whom the martyrs die,
all laud and glory be,
with Father and with Holy Ghost,
to all eternity.**

Words: John Riley (1858–1945)

Tune: Richmond
Thomas Hewis (1734–1820)
Descant: Andrew Nethsingha (b.1968)

All kneel for

The Prayers
led by
A member of the Board of Management

The prayers end:

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit,
in communion with Margaret and with all your saints,
entrusting one another and all our life to Christ:
Let us now commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Silence is kept for open prayer

All stand to sing

Hymn

**Rejoice in God's saints,
today and all days;
a world without saints
forgets how to praise.
Their faith in acquiring
the habit of prayer,
their depth of adoring,
Lord, help us to share.**

**Some march with events
to turn them God's way;
some need to withdraw,
the better to pray;
some carry the gospel
through fire and through flood:
our world is their parish;
their purpose is God.**

**Rejoice in those saints,
unpraised and unknown,
who bear someone's cross
or shoulder their own;
they shame our complaining,
our comforts, our cares:
what patience in caring,
what courage, is theirs!**

**Rejoice in God's saints,
today and all days;
a world without saints
forgets how to praise.
In loving, in living,
they prove it is true:
the way of self giving,
Lord, leads us to you. Amen. Amen.**

Words: F. Pratt Green (1903–2000)

Tune: Laudate Dominum
Hubert Parry (1848–1918)

Remain standing

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
**and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and evermore.
Amen.**

The officiant and choir sings

The Lord be with you
and with thy spirit

Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Music: Peter Aston

Remain standing as the servers, choir, and clergy move into the Vestry.

*You are invited to be seated for the playing of the Organ Voluntary,
or to leave quietly at this point.*

Music after the Service

Chorale Prelude on 'Croft's 136th'

Hubert Parry

The congregation is invited to a
fellowship dinner in the parish hall

St. Margaret's Convent: The Origins

An extract from a centenary publication (1987)

- Anne Abayasekara (1925–2015)

It was at Archdeacon Mathew's invitation that the Mother Superior of the Society of St. Margaret's in East Grinstead, England, decided to establish a branch of the Sisterhood in Ceylon (as Sri Lanka was then known). The far-sighted Archdeacon was dissatisfied with the state of the Church in this colony of the British Empire.

“At present everything is in chaos”, he wrote. “The Churches are ill-appointed and the work is nowhere in hand, everything has to be done. Our work is to quicken and organise the Church and convert it into a Missionary Power.”

He wisely foresaw that a dedicated band of Anglican nuns could play a significant part in the great forward movement he dreamed of. Among the plans he listed for them was management of the Girls' High School (later to grow into the prestigious Bishop's College), the teaching and superintendence of the Pettah Girls' Home, the care of the Church linen and holy vessels, and work for the benefit of the poor of Colombo.

The nuns of East Grinstead were prepared to take up the challenge and so it was that one hundred years ago, in 1887, the first Sisters of St. Margaret, Sisters Joanna, Bridget and Verena, arrived in Colombo and were met by the Bishop of Colombo and the Archdeacon.

On All Saints' Day, November 1st, at a Choral Celebration held in the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Bishop Copelston welcomed the Sisters to Ceylon and to his Diocese and blessed each of them at the altar rails.

After a brief stay at 'Ebor House', Green Path, Kollupitiya, the Sisters moved into a large, two storied, building - formerly a coffee store - set in a coconut garden (hence 'Polwatte') and only a stone's throw from St. Michael's Church. At the dedication of the house in the following year, the Bishop solemnly gave them “Mission and authority in the name of the Lord to go forth into the Diocese, to do the work of the Sisters of Charity.”

An extract from a centenary publication (1987)

Soon they were joined by more nuns from East Grinstead and they became a familiar sight in Polwatte and its environs. Gradually, they extended their services to Moraturwa, Galle, Matara, Kandy and Kurunegala. In Spirit and in letter they carried out the rule of the Society in serving the needs of children.

The Girls' Home which was started in Wolfendhal Street, Pettah in 1886, was moved by the Sisters to the more congenial atmosphere of Polwatte and renamed St. Margaret's Home - a place which, over the years, has sheltered not only orphans and destitute girls, but also others who for various reasons lacked stable homes of their own.

Today, our own Sisters, in unspectacular ways, toil devotedly and tirelessly for the poor and the needy and ask for no reward save that of knowing that they do His will and are of service to those who need them.



St. Margaret's Convent

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