



ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 30, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.

## Poetry and Music A Marian Passion Ballad



*The Girlhood of Mary Virgin (1849) by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)*

*“All her influence has been good and holy like herself;  
there was never such a mother,  
the world can never match such love.”  
– Robert Buchanan*

*The People stand as the Officiant enters.*

## OPENING SENTENCE

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

*Luke 2:34-35*

## THE LORD’S PRAYER

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Officiant* Let us pray.

*All* Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

*The People sit.*

## Prelude: Her Spirit's Joy

### The Song of Mary

Luke 1:45–56

The Song of Mary, or Magnificat by its Latin name, was spoken by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth who was then six-months pregnant with John the Baptist, shortly after Gabriel's Annunciation to Mary. In this church it has been sung hundreds of times in the context of Evensong, but choosing to speak it here accomplishes two things: giving Mary the first word of this service above the male Victorian poets that follow, and letting the words speak without a choir by a lone female voice to remind us that this is a song sung by a teenage girl in first-century Nazareth.

*Text from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.*

## I. Pictures of Joy

### Two Sonnets on "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin"

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

(1828–1882)

Gabriel Rossetti's greatest contribution to Christian poetry was certainly his mentorship and support for his sister Christina, but he produced these poems to accompany and explain the symbolism in one of his religious paintings, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," with the still teenaged Christina as model for Mary, and their mother as the model for Mary's mother Anne. The sonnets engraved on its frame are presented in reverse and therefore chronological order here, as the end of the first one references a painting of the Annunciation, "Ecce Ancilla Domini!", begun the same year but finished in 1853.

*Inscribed on "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," 1849, now in the Tate Gallery.*

## II. Childhood Joy

**From *The Ballad of Mary the Mother***      Robert Buchanan (1841–1901)

Buchanan's poem of 1,765 lines and over 11,000 words is an epic ballad of the life of Christ through the perspective of his woeful mother Mary, who narrates to "Mary the Maiden," a fictional female disciple of Jesus who shares characteristics with the Virgin Mary and with Mary Magdalene. One of the prolific poet, novelist, and playwright's final works, Buchanan's Ballad was written after two seminal sorrows of his own life: the loss of his mother Margaret in 1894, and the loss of his Christian faith. It is first and foremost an unabashed exaltation of the matchless love of a mother, while also being a bitter rejection of Christian dogma. This first of three excerpts tells Jesus's infancy up through Joseph's death, and includes the story of his parents losing and finding him in the temple (Luke 2:44-46).

The Ballad of Mary the Mother, *excerpts from lines 97–736, published 1897.*

### III. First Miracle Joy and Sorrow

#### Of the Wedding at Cana

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926)

Though not technically a Victorian poet himself, one of Rainer Maria Rilke's literary influences who shaped his poetic perspective on Christ was Gabriel Rossetti's pre-Raphaelite brother Algernon Charles Swinburne. In "Von Der Hochzeit Zu Kana," Rilke implies that Mary "forced" Christ's earthly ministry by asking for a miracle at Cana, to which he responds, in John 2:4, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My time has not yet come." (This verse is also in the epigraph of Buchanan's *Ballad*.) Scholars attribute this portrayal of Mary's "force" in part to Rilke's feelings towards his own mother's influence on his religious expression.

*Published in Das Marien-Leben (The Life of Mary), 1912.  
Translation by Rt. Rev. Dr. Arthur Freeman (1927–2013), 1993.*

#### Original Text

Konnte sie denn anders, als auf ihn  
stolz sein, der ihr Schlichtestes verschönte?  
War nicht selbst die hohe, grossgewöhnte  
Nacht wie ausser sich, da er erschien?

Ging nicht auch, dass er sich einst verloren,  
unerhört zu seiner Glorie aus?  
Hatten nicht die Weisesten die Ohren  
mit dem Mund vertauscht? Und war das Haus

nicht wie neu von seiner Stimme? Ach,  
sicher hatte sie zu hundert Malen  
ihre Freude an ihm auszustrahlen  
sich verwehrt. Sie ging ihm staunend nach.

Aber da bei jenem Hochzeitsfeste,  
als es unversehns an Wein gebracht,-  
sah sie hin und bat um eine Geste  
und begriff nicht, dass er widersprach.

Und dann tat ers. Sie verstand es später,  
wie sie ihn in seinen Weg gedrängt:  
denn jetzt war er wirklich Wundertäter,  
und das ganze Opfer war verhängt,  
unaufhaltsam. Ja, es stand geschrieben.  
Aber war es damals schon bereit?  
Sie: sie hatte es herbeigetrieben  
in der Blindheit ihrer Eitelkeit.

An dem Tisch voll Früchten und Gemüse  
freute sie sich mit und sah nicht ein,  
dass das Wasser ihrer Tränendrüsen  
Blut geworden war mit diesem Wein.

#### IV. Seaside Sorrow

**From *The Ballad of Mary the Mother***      Robert Buchanan (1841–1901)

The only two interactions between Mary and her adult son prior to the Passion are the Wedding at Cana and the time when, as recorded in three of the Gospels (Matthew 12:46–50, Mark 3:31–35, and Luke 8:19–21), she and his brothers seek him and are met with this heartbreaking reply: “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Buchanan returns to this rejection three times in the *Ballad*, as in this imagined conversation by the Sea of Galilee as Mary’s fear grows that her Son’s ways are becoming more strange and threatening to the religious establishment.

The Ballad of Mary the Mother, *excerpts from lines 959–1,266, published 1897.*

## V. Resurrection Joy and Sorrow

*The following two poems will be read as a set.*

### To Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Robert Buchanan (1841–1901)

The “fleshly” nature of Gabriel Rossetti’s poetry so rankled Scottish poet Robert Buchanan that his excoriating review of *Poems by D.G. Rossetti* and the vicious, overblown, literary fight that followed worsened Gabriel’s mental illness and addiction issues, leading to a suicide attempt in 1872, while the critical response penned by Gabriel and others helped relegate Buchanan to his relative obscurity today. Buchanan—who had never met Rossetti and couldn’t have known his mental state—deeply regretted the whole affair, and after Rossetti’s death on Easter Day in 1882, Buchanan wrote these eight lines to his memory. Taken merely in its literal context, this poem may seem out of place in this service, but the themes and images—particularly lilies, death as sleep, and the invocation to “arise” we will hear later in the dedicant’s sister’s poem—are also found throughout the other poems, and here paint Gabriel as a type of Lazarus.

*Published in God and the Man, second edition, 1882.*

### Cantos XXXI and XXXII, *In Memoriam*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson  
(1809–1892)

Jesus’ anointing by a woman is recorded in all four Gospels, but all are anonymous save Mary of Bethany in John 12, following the resurrection of her brother Lazarus accomplished by Jesus in John 11. Mary Magdalene, often conflated with the anonymous anointers is, in fact, beaten to the burial preparations by Mary of Bethany—perhaps why Buchanan will place her at the Cross and Tomb later. Mary’s grasp of what awaits Jesus seems solidified, in Tennyson’s poem, by witnessing what befell her brother. These two cantos come from Tennyson’s book-length poem in memory of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam.

*Published in In Memoriam A.H.H., 1850.*

## VI. Ultimate Sorrow

From *The Ballad of Mary the Mother*      Robert Buchanan (1841–1901)

Buchanan's depiction of Jesus' death and burial places "Maries twain" at the tomb, though his are not the same three as in the Gospel and in Christian tradition, besides Mary, Jesus' mother—Mary of Bethany is there as well, along with the "Mary the Maiden" figure who has been in dialogue with Mary throughout the poem. At this point we are brought *in media res*, leaving the Maid's bower to witness the Crucifixion and Death, Descent from the Cross, and Burial of Jesus, which are the fifth through seventh of the traditional Seven Sorrows of Mary.

The Ballad of Mary the Mother, *excerpts from lines 1,323–1,728, published 1897.*

## VII. Sleeping Sorrows

*The following two poems will be read as a set.*

### Mary Magdalene and The Other Mary:

#### A Song for All Maries

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

Christina Rossetti's poem referencing the "other Mary" in Matthew 27:61 and Matthew 28:1, identified in that gospel as Mary the mother of James and Joseph, has a thrice-repeated refrain of "Our Master lies asleep," that dovetails with the resemblance of death to sleep pervading all of Robert Buchanan's writing about the dead Jesus, as well as his dedication to Gabriel Rossetti above.

*Published in A Pageant and Other Poems, 1881.*

#### Storm in the Night

Robert Buchanan (1841–1901)

This is Buchanan's second version of "Storm in the Night," using the same ballad form and on the same theme of Mary Magdalene's words spoken to the angels in John 20:13 on Easter Morning: "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." The first version in *The Earthquake* (1885) was written from Mary Magdalene's point of view, while Buchanan narrates this second version with language that seems to anticipate the later *Ballad of Mary the Mother*. In the Gospel narrative, Mary Magdalene turns from the angels and sees the resurrected Jesus, but Buchanan depicts himself and her as bereaved by the utterly absent Christ, indicating the complete desertion of his faith at this point in his life.

*Published in The Buchanan Ballads Old and New, 1892 and The New Rome, 1898.*

## Postlude: Her Spring Joy

### The May Magnificat

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1841–1901)

The poems of Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins were published posthumously by his friend Robert Seymour Bridges—who is also the translator or adaptor of many hymns found in *The 1982 Hymnal*. Hopkins’ visual and poetic art were influenced greatly by Gabriel Rossetti’s artistic brotherhood, the Pre-Raphaelites, as well as by Christina Rossetti, who he met in 1864. His “sprung rhythms” and almost tongue-twister like poems practically demand spoken treatment, and the title of this poem fittingly draws us back to the beginning of the service with Mary’s Song in her own words, and offers a vivacious counterpoint to the stormy cynicism of Buchanan’s disbelief.

*Published in Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited by Robert Bridges, 1918.*

### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Officiant* Almighty God, whose dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*All* Amen.

*The Congregation is asked to depart in silence.*

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The Rev. Dr. Nathan Haydon *Officiant*  
Kathryn Haydon, Ph.D. *Recitation*  
David Sinden *Organ*

# HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

## WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, April 1

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist (Grace Chapel)

## MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 2

7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (Grace Chapel)

6:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist,  
followed by an Altar of Repose in Grace Chapel

## GOOD FRIDAY, April 3

12:00 p.m. Liturgy of the Day

6:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

## HOLY SATURDAY, April 4

10:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Day; Egg Hunt follows

## EASTER DAY, April 5 *Breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.*

6:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Sunrise (Laird Garden)

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Nursery will be available for children up to five years old  
during the 9:00 a.m. service



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