

## **The Joy of Evensong – Mothering Sunday**

We're wearing our hoods for Choral Evensong  
Letting them drape down our backs like slightly parted lips.  
Like the Propers this morning, being glad, all that love her,  
Rejoice that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation.

Laetare, and the Curate is pretty in pink for the Angelus.  
Hail Mary, full of grace, gratia plena, hand made for the Lord.  
Psalm 30, Coverdale of course, so BCP, so English, with its major-minor chants,  
But basically a take on Luther's strong German translation of the Hebrew.  
Product of that earlier European project, the Reformation.  
And England is still undecided.

Singen praises unto the Lord, O ye saints of his;  
For his wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, und in his pleasure is life.  
Thou hast put off mein sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;  
O mein Gott, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Costume change and he's in red and silver, coping splendidly  
With Old and New Testament, and Four Collects in Lent,  
While we gaily trip our way through Tallis's Dorian moments.  
Enjoying the false relations while we may.  
In fictional Lindchester Freddie's getting a stiff lecture from his Dorian mentor.  
Purcell's passionate orgy of eight intertwining voices reaches its climax,  
Pleading, "Hear my prayer O Lord and let my crying come unto thee."

Another costume change for the golden moments of Benediction,  
Meditating on the Blessed Trinity united in Christ  
In the most holy sacrament of the Altar; though it is night.  
Panis angelicus, tre panini in uno panino, perhaps.  
After our Roman Mass this morning at St Mike's Transponteferro,  
Tonight it's the Catholic full house, Immaculate Conception, Glorious Assumption,  
Spouse most chaste – Poor old Joseph.

Are the Candles getting taller each week now,  
Or is that another figleaf of my naughty imagination?  
In this strange inversion of my adolescence,  
Old age diminishes the raging hormones but also their suppression.  
O Salutaris Hostia, Opening wide the gate of heaven to us below.  
With Tantrum Ergo, Thomas Aquinas helps us this great sacrament to revere.  
Let us adore, genuflect and process offstage in peace and joy,  
The Liturgy of our Mother Church verily performed.

Psallam spiritu et mente; Let me sing with spirit and with understanding.

Richard Barnes – Mon 7 March 2016 following Mothering Sunday.