



Milan Cathedral

THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT

Ambrosian Rite

The Dean and Chapter welcome you to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Santa Maria Nascente, the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Milan. The Cathedral welcomes you to the Holy Mass celebrated according to the Milanese Rite, also named Ambrosian after its main Patron, St. Ambrose (bishop of Milan from 374 to 397). This Rite has its own Calendar and the readings of this leaflet are taken from the Ambrosian Lectionary.

OLD TESTAMENT CATECHESIS

First Reading

Gn 1: 1 - 2: 3

A reading from the Book of Genesis

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters.

Then God said: "Let there be light", and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." Evening came, and morning followed – the first day.

Then God said: "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other." God made the dome, and it separated the water be-

low the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened. God called the dome "sky." Evening came, and morning followed – the second day.

Then God said: "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear." And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. God called the dry land "earth," and the basin of water he called "sea." God saw that it was good. Then God said: "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it." And so it happened: the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning followed – the third day.

Then God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years, and serve as lights in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth." And so it happened: God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night, and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning followed – the fourth day.

Then God said: "Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky." God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of crawling living creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw that it was good, and God blessed them,

saying: "Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth." Evening came, and morning followed – the fifth day.

Then God said: "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: tame animals, crawling things, and every kind of wild animal." And so it happened: God made every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, and every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. God saw that it was good. Then God said: "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth." God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish

of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.”

God also said: “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food.” And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed – the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

The word of the Lord.

Second Reading

Gn 22: 1-19

A reading from the Book of Genesis

In those days, God put Abraham to the test and said to him: Abraham! "Here I am!" he replied. Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you."

Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey, took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac, and after cutting the wood for the burnt offering, set out for the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham caught sight of the place from a distance. Abraham said to his servants: "Stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over there. We will worship and then come back to you." So Abraham took the wood for the

burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two walked on together, Isaac spoke to his father Abraham. "Father!" he said. "Here I am," he replied. Isaac continued, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" "My son," Abraham answered, "God will provide the sheep for the burnt offering." Then the two walked on together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he bound his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar. Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am," he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the angel. "Do not do the least thing to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you did not with-

hold from me your son, your only one." Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. Abraham named that place Yahweh-yireh; hence people today say, "On the mountain the Lord will provide."

A second time the angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by my very self – oracle of the Lord – that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your son, your only one, I will bless you and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants will take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth will find blessing, because you obeyed my command."

Abraham then returned to his servants, and they set out together for Beer-sheba, where Abraham lived.

The word of the Lord.

Third Reading

Ex 12: 1-11

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: "This month will stand at the head of your calendar; you will reckon it the first month of the year. Tell the whole community of Israel: 'On the tenth of this month every family must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household. If a household is too small for a lamb, it along with its nearest neighbor will procure one,

and apportion the lamb's cost in proportion to the number of persons, according to what each household consumes. Your lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats. You will keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole community of Israel assembled, it will be slaughtered during the evening twilight. They will take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They will consume its meat that same night, eating it roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or even boiled in water, but roasted, with its head and shanks and inner organs. You must not keep any of it beyond the morning; whatever is left over in the morning must be burned up. This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet

and your staff in hand, you will eat it in a hurry. It is the Lord's Passover".

The word of the Lord.

Cantus

Dn 3: 52. 54. 57. 77. 85

"Blessed are you, O Lord,
the God of our ancestors,
praiseworthy and exalted
above all forever;

R Amen.

And blessed is your holy
and glorious name,
praiseworthy and exalted
above all for all ages.

R Amen.

Blessed are you on the throne
of your kingdom,
praiseworthy and exalted
above all forever.

R Amen.

Bless the Lord,
all you works of the Lord,
praise and exalt him
above all forever.

R Amen.

You springs, bless the Lord;
praise and exalt him
above all forever.

R Amen.

We bless the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit;
praise and exalt him
above all forever.

R Amen.

Fourth Reading

Ex 13: 18b - 14: 8

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days, Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt arrayed for battle. Moses also took Joseph's bones with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites take a solemn oath, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you must bring my bones up with you from here." Setting out from Succoth, they camped at Ethamg near the edge of the wilderness. The Lord preceded them, in the daytime by means of a column of cloud to show them the way, and at night by means of a column of fire to give them light. Thus they could travel both day and night. Neither the column of cloud by day nor the column of fire by night ever left its place in front of the people.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses: "Speak to the Israelites: Let them turn about and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. Camp in front of Baal-zephon, just opposite, by the sea. Pharaoh will then say, 'The Israelites are wandering about aimlessly in the land. The wilderness has closed in on them.' I will so harden Pharaoh's heart that he will pursue them. Thus I will receive glory through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord."

When it was reported to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart about the people. "What in the world have we done!" they said. "We have released Israel from our service!" So Pharaoh harnessed his chariots and took his army with him. He took six hundred select chariots and all the chariots of Egypt, with officers on all of them. The Lord hardened the heart

of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites while they were going out in triumph.

The word of the Lord.

Cantus

Ex 15: 1-3. 18. 19c-21

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

"I will sing to the Lord,
for he is gloriously triumphant;
horse and chariot he has cast
into the sea.

My strength and my refuge is the Lord,
and he has become my savior.

This is my God, I praise him;
the God of my father, I extol him.

The Lord is a warrior,

Lord is his name!

May the Lord reign forever and ever!"

Israelites walked on dry land through the midst of the sea. Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, while all the women went out after her with tambourines, dancing; and she responded to them:

"Sing to the Lord,
for he is gloriously triumphant."

Fifth Reading

Is 54: 17c - 55: 11

A reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, "This is the lot of the servants of the Lord, their vindication from me – oracle of the Lord. All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy grain and eat; come, buy grain without money, wine and milk without cost! Why spend your

money for what is not bread; your wages for what does not satisfy? Only listen to me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Pay attention and come to me; listen, that you may have life. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the steadfast loyalty promised to David. As I made him a witness to peoples, a leader and commander of peoples. So shall you summon a nation you knew not, and a nation that knew you not shall run to you, because of the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their way, and sinners their thoughts; let them turn to the Lord to find mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways – oracle of the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher

than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts. Yet just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but shall do what pleases me, achieving the end for which I sent it.”

The word of the Lord.

Sixth Reading

Is 1: 16-19

A reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, “Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do

good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right – says the Lord –. Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they may become white as wool. If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land.”

The word of the Lord.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

Acts 2: 22-28

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In those days, Peter said to the people, "You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. For David says of him: 'I saw the Lord ever before me, with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart has been glad and

my tongue has exulted; my flesh, too, will dwell in hope, because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.”

The word of the Lord.



Psalm

Ps 117 (118)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
his mercy endures forever.

Let Israel say:

“His mercy endures forever.” **R**

The Lord’s right hand is raised;
the Lord’s right hand works valiantly.
I shall not die but live
and declare the deeds of the Lord. **R**

The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the Lord has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes. **R**

Second Reading (Epistle)

Rom 1: 1-7

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel about his Son, descended from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles, among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel

Mt 28: 1-7

A reading of the holy Gospel according to Matthew

In that time. After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised

from the dead, and he is going before
you to Galilee; there you will see him.'
Behold, I have told you."

The Gospel of the Lord.



THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

In the Ambrosian Liturgy the Rite of peace comes before the offertory (presentation of the gifts), according to the teaching of Our Lord: «If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift» (Matthew 5:23-24).

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Pater noster

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.

The Holy Church celebrates the Risen Lord. The Cathedral keeps magnificent works of art and treasures the relics of many holy bishops; we mention here only St. Carlo Borromeo (1538-1584), and the Blessed Archbishops Andrea Carlo Ferrari (1850-1921) and Alfredo Ildefonso Schuster (1880-1954).

Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano

Image: Milan, Duomo Museum,
tapestry, 15th cent.



DUOMO DI MILANO