

Lara Glass: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Lara Glass: Welcome to morning prayers. Please stand as you are able for a responsive reading found in your Black Appleton Psalter, Psalm number 31 on page 16.

Lara Glass: In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust. Let me never be ashamed. Deliver me in thy righteousness.

Congregation: Bow down thine ear to me. Deliver me speedily. Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me.

Lara Glass: For thou art my rock and my fortress. Therefore, for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

Congregation: Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me, for thou art my strength.

Lara Glass: Into thine hand I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, o Lord God of truth.

Congregation: I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble. Thou hast known my soul in adversities.

Lara Glass: And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. Thou hast set my feet in a large room.

Congregation: I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. Nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Lara Glass: O love the Lord, all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Congregation: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Lara Glass: You may be seated.

Choir: (Singing)

Mark Jordan: I didn't expect to hear that Marian Prayer this morning in Appleton Chapel.

Mark Jordan: A reading from the diary of Increase Mather, then president of Harvard College.

- Mark Jordan: "September 3rd, 1693. AM, I preached at Boston, PM, I preached at Cambridge. Memorandum. As I was writing to Cambridge, I prayed to God, begged that my labors might be blessed for good to the souls of the students, at which I was much melted. Also saying before the Lord that some workings of His providence seemed to intimate, that I must be returned to England again. In this there was something extraordinary, either divine or angelical."
- Mark Jordan: We may regard this early service as a vestige, quaint or troubling of Harvard's now distant religious origins, but the service also records our descent from British colleges. Morning prayer, typically with Choral Fellows, counted as a collegiate obligation. Attendance was compulsory here until 1886, when godless Harvard abandoned it at the urging of the plumber, professor of morals, who was reminded by the coerced congregation of state prisoners. Two centuries before, when Mather rode to Cambridge, he had already spent years in England advocating for the colony and its college. He had persuaded the king to authorize new legal recognition for Harvard.
- Mark Jordan: His fervor in prayer, his melting, did not exclude political cunning. We date the founding of medieval European universities by charters that grant rights of self-governance. Indeed, the medieval word universitas refers to a type of guild. We regard the robe I wear as costuming for graduation. It is in fact the uniform of a congregation of skilled artisans, master of arts, that is, teacher of skills.
- Mark Jordan: If a guild seems too pedestrian a model for intellectual life, I suggest that it provides clarifying reminders and cautions. It is, to my mind, clearer than our depleted word community, or worse, our sentimental analogies to an ideal family. Harvard is not my family, and on some days I have been grateful for that. Still, belonging to this universitas imposes obligations. It requires, for example, your long commitment to the cultivation of learning. Reaching a degree that is a step or stage marks progress along a path that has no end.
- Mark Jordan: The guild model also issues cautions. Any guild can become a monster, puffed up with pretension, bellowing for the strict enforcement of some orthodoxy or prejudice. All the university guilds in Mather's time excluded women, some authorized the execution of heretics. Mather was awarded Harvard's first doctorate in theology during the witch trials at Salem, trials that he sought to stop.
- Mark Jordan: Even when members of the guild act with justice and faithfulness, they face the temptation to mistake the guild for its arts, the means for the end. "Perhaps I should return to England," Mather worries. "There are funds to be raised, contracts negotiated." He forgets in that melting moment that the college exceeds its arrangements. We entrust our learning to charters and corporations, dress it with crimson robes and heraldic shields, house it in monumental buildings, as if those arrangements were sufficient to protect learning from persecution or deformity.

Mark Jordan: The arrangements are at best preparations for our arts. The guild's best defense is always their ardent cultivation. Like stonemasons or painters or singers, we are judged according to the skilled beauties we learn to make together. "Vita brevis, ars vero longa" begins a canonical text from the faculty of medicine, but its lesson applies to all. "Our lives are short, our arts long." It is sometimes good to recall the high-flown claims expressed in our charters, but better still to seek daily help from the highest and most benevolent advocate.

Mark Jordan: Whatever Mather's crimes or delusions, I would not hesitate to join him in one prayer, that our laborers might be blessed for the good to the souls of the students, our own souls too. And I would add, for the flourishing of the arts to which we are each apprenticed.

Lara Glass: Please join me in offering the Lord's Prayer, printed on the reverse of your order of worship.

Congregation: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.

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Congregation: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

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Congregation: Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

Lara Glass: Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

Congregation: ...as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lara Glass: ...as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Congregation: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Lara Glass: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Congregation: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Lara Glass: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Lara Glass: Please stand as you are able to sing hymn number 314 in your Crimson Memorial Church hymnal. O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee, number 314.

Congregation: (singing)

Lara Glass: In the words of John O'Donohue, "May we live this day compassionate of heart, clear in word, gracious in awareness, courageous in thought, and generous in love." Amen.