Ordo Virtutum - text and translation
(based on translation by Peter Dronke, 1981 and 1997)

Incipit Ordo Virtutum

Patriarche et Prophete
Qui sunt hi, qui ut nubes?

Virtutes
O antiqui sancti, quid admiramini in nobis?
Verbum del clarescit in forma hominis, et ideo fulgemus cum illo, edificantes membra sui pulchri corporis.

Incipit Ordo Virtutum

Here begins the Play of the Virtues:

Patriarchs and Prophets:
Who are these, who seem like clouds?

Virtues:
O ancient holy ones, why do you marvel at us? The Word of God grows bright in the form of a man, and thus we shine with him, building the limbs of his beautiful body.

Patriarchs and Prophets:
We are roots, and you are branches, the fruit of the living eye, of which we were the shadow.

Lament of embodied Souls:
We are strangers here! What have we done, straying to realms of sin? We should have been daughters of the King, but we have fallen into the shadow of sins. Living Sun, carry us on your shoulders back to that most just inheritance we lost in Adam! O king of kings, we are fighting in your battle.

Soul, joyful:
Oh sweet divinity, o gentle life, in which I shall wear a bright robe, accepting that which I lost in my first formation - I cry to you and invoke all the Virtues.

Soul, joyfully:
Oh happy Soul, oh sweet creature of God, fashioned in the great height of the wisdom of God, you show much love.

Soul, joyfully:
Oh let me come to you freely, that you may give me the kiss of your heart!

Soul turns to sadness:
Oh heavy toil, oh harsh weight that I bear in the dress of this life: it is too heavy for me to fight against my body.

Virtues to Soul:
Anima, you that were given your place by the will of God, you instrument of bliss, why are you so tearful in the face of the evil God crushed in a maidenly being? You must overcome the devil in our midst.

Soul: Support me, help me to stand firm!

Knowledge-of-God to Soul:
See the dress you are wearing, daughter of salvation: be steadfast and you will never fall.

Soul, sadly: 
michi, non possum perficere hoc quod sum induita. Certe illud volo abicere!
is me, I cannot perfect this dress I have put on! Indeed I want to cast it off!

Virtutes
O infelix conscientia, o misera Anima, quare abscondis faciem tuam coram creatore tuo?
Virtues: Unhappy state of mind, oh poor Anima, why do you hide your face in the presence of your Creator?

Scientia Dei
Tu nescis, nec vides, nec sapis illum qui te constituit.
Knowledge of God: You do not know or see or taste the One who has set you here.

Anima illa
Deus creavit mundum: non facio illi iniuriam sed volo uti illo!
Soul: God created the world: I'm doing him no injury - I only want to enjoy it!

Strepitus Diaboli ad Animam illam
Fatue, fatue quid prodest tibi laborare? Respice mundum, et amplectetur te magno honore.
Devil, shouting at Soul: What use to you is toiling foolishly? Look to the world: it will embrace you with great honour.

Virtutes
O plangens vox est hec maximi doloris! Ach, ach, quedam mirabilis victoria in mirabili desiderio dei surrexit, in qua desiderio hominis lasciviam fugit. Luge, luge ergo in his, Innocentia, que in pudore bono integritatem non amisisti, et que avariciam guturis antiqui serpentis ibi non devorasti.
Virtues: Is this not a plangent voice of the greatest sorrow? Ah, a certain marvellous victory already rose in that Soul, in her wondrous longing for God, in which a sensual delight was secretely hidden, alas, where previously the will had known no guilt and the desire fled man’s wantonness. Mourn for this, mourn, Innocence, you who lost no perfection in your fair modesty, who did not devour greedily, with the belly of the serpent of old.

Diabolus
Que est hec Potestas, quod nullus sit preter deum? Ego autem dico, qui voluerit me et voluntatem meam sequi, dabo illi omnia. Tu vero, tuis sequacibus nichil habes quod dare possis, quia etiam vos omnes nescitis quid sitis.
Devil: What is this Power - as if there were no one but God? I say, whoever wants to follow me and do my will, I'll give him everything. As for you, Humility, you have nothing that you can give your followers: none of you even know what you are!

Humilitas
Ego cum meis sodalibus bene scio quod tu es ille antiquus dracho qui super summum volare voluisti - sed ipse deus in abyssum proiect te.
Humility: My comrades and I know very well that you are the ancient dragon who wanted to fly higher than the highest one: but God himself hurled you in the abyss.

Virtutes
Nos autem omnes in excelsis habitamus.
Virtues: As for us, we dwell in the heights.

Humilitas
Ego, Humilitas, regina Virtutum, dico: venite ad me, Virtutes, et enutriam vos ad requirendam perditam dragmam et ad coronandum in perseverantia felicem.
Humility: I, Humility, queen of the Virtues, say: come to me, you Virtues, and I’ll give you the skill to seek and find the drachma that is lost and to crown her who perseveres blissfully.

Virtutes
O gloriosa regina, et O suavissima mediatrix, libenter venimus.
Virtues: Oh glorious queen, most gentle mediator, we come gladly.

Humilitas
Ideo, dilectissime filie, teneo vos in regali talamo.
Humility: Because of this, beloved daughters, I’ll keep your place in the royal wedding-chamber.

Karitas
Ego Karitas, flos amabilis - venite ad me, Virtutes, et perducam vos in candidam lucem floris virge.
Charity: I am Charity, the flower of love - come to me, Virtures, and I'll lead you into the radiant light of the flower of the rod.
Virtutes
O dilectissime flos, ardenti desiderio currimus ad te.
Virtue:
Dearest flower, we run to you with burning desire.

Timor Dei
Timor Dei, vos felicissimas filias preparo ut inspiciatis in deum vivum et non pereatis.
Fear of God:
I, Fear of God, can prepare blissful daughters to gaze upon the living God and not die of it.

Virtutes
O Timor, valde utilis es nobis: habemus enim perfectum studium numquam a te separari.
Virtue:
Oh Fear, you can help us greatly: we are filled with the longing never to part from you.

Diabolus
Devil:
Bravo! Bravo! What is this great fear, and this great love? Where is the champion? Where the prize-giver? You don't know what you are worshipping!

Virtutes
Tu autem exterritus es per summum iudicem, quia, inflatus superbia, mersus es in gehennam.
Virtue:
But you, you were terrified at the supreme Judge, for, swollen with pride, you were plunged into Gehenna.

Obedientia
Ego lucida Obedientia - venite ad me, pulcherrime filie, et reducam vos ad patriam et ad osculum regis.
Obedience:
I am shining Obedience - come to me, lovely daughters, and I'll lead you to your homeland and to the kiss of the King.

Virtutes
O dulcissima vocatrix, nos decet in magno studio pervenire ad te.
Virtue:
Sweetest summoner, it is right for us to come, most eagerly, to you.

Fides
Ego Fides, speculum vitae: venerables filie, venite ad me et ostendo vobis fontem salientem.
Faith:
I am Faith, the mirror of life: worthy daughters, come to me and I shall show you the leaping fountain.

Virtutes
O serena, speculata, habemus fiduciam pervenire ad verum fontem per te.
Virtue:
Oh Serene one, mirror-like, we trust in you: we shall arrive at that fountain through you.

Spes
Ego sum dulcis conspectrix viarum oculi, quam fallax torpor non decipit unde vos, o tenebre, non potestis me obnubilare.
Hope:
I am the sweet beholder of the living eye, I whom no dissembling torpor can deceive. Darkness, you cannot cloud my gaze!

Virtutes
O vivens vita, et o suavis consolatrix, tu mortifera mortis vincis et vidente oculo clausuram celi aperis.
Virtue:
Living life, gentle, consoling one, you overcome the deadly shafts of death and with your seeing eye lay heaven's gate open.

Castitas
O Virginitas, in regali thalamo stas. O quam dulciter ardes in amplexibus regis, cum te sol perfluget ita quad nobilis flos tuus nunquam cadet. O virgo nobilis, te nunquam inveniet umbra in cadente flore!
Chastity:
O Virginity, you remain within the royal chamber. How sweetly you burn in the King's embraces, when the Sun shines through you, never letting your noble flower fall. Gentle maiden, you will never know the shadow over the falling flower!

Virtutes
Flos campi cadit vento, pluvia spargit eum. O Virginitas, tu permanes in symphonis supernorum civium: unde es suavis flos qui nunquam arcesc.
Virtue:
The flower of the fields falls in the wind, the rain splashes it. But you, Virginity, remain in the symphonies of heavenly habitants: you are the tender flower that will never grow dry.
Innocentia
Fugite, oves, spurcicias Diaboli!

Innocence:
My flock, flee from the Devil's taints!

Virtutes
Has te succurrente fugiemus.

Virtues:
We shall flee them, if you give us aid.

Contemptus Mundi
Ego, Contemptus Mundi, sum candor vite. O misera terre peregrinatio in multis laboribus - te dimitto. O Virtutes, venite ad me et ascendamus ad fontem vite!

Contempt-for-the-World:
I, Contempt-for-the-World, am the heat life. Oh wretched, exiled state on earth, with all your toils - I let you go. Come to me, you Virtues, and we will climb up to the fountain of life!

Virtutes
O gloriosa domina, tu semper habes certamina Christi, o magna virtus, que mundum conculcas, unde etiam victoriose in celo habitas.

Virtues:
Glorious lady, you that always fight the battles of Christ, oh great power that treads the world under your feet, you thereby dwell in heaven, victoriously.

Amor Celestis
Ego aurea porta in colo fixa sum: qui per me transit numqua amaram petulantiam in mente sua gustabit.

Heavenly Love:
I am the golden gate fixed in heaven: whoever passes through me will never taste bitter rebelliousness in her mind.

Virtutes
O filia regis, tu semper es in amplexibus quos mundus fugit. O quam suavis est tua dilectio in summo deo!

Virtues:
Royal daughter, how comely you are in the royal nuptials!

[Disciplina]:
Ego sum amatrix simplicium morum qui turpia opera nesciunt; sed semper in regum regem aspicio et amplector eum in honore altissimo.

Discipline:
I am one who loves innocent ways that know nothing ignoble; I always gaze upon the King of kings and, as my highest honour, I embrace him.

Virtutes
O tu angelica socia, tu es valde ornata in regalibus nuptiis.

Virtues:
Angelic comrade, how comely you are in the royal nuptials!

Verecundia
Ego obtenebro et fugo atque conculco omnes spurcicias Diaboli.

Modesty:
I cover over, drive away or tread down all the filths of the Devil.

Virtutes
Tu es in edificatione celestis Ierusalem, florens in candidis liliis.

Virtues:
Yours is a part in the building of heavenly Jerusalem, flowering among shining lilies.

Misericordia
O quam amara est illa duricia que non cedit in mentibus, misericorditer dolori succurrens! Ego autem omnibus dolentibus manum porrigere volo.

Mercy:
How bitter in human minds is the harshness that does not soften and mercifully ease pain! I want to reach out my hand to all who suffer.

Virtutes
O laudablis mater peregrinorum, tu semper erigis illos, atque ungis pauperes et debiles.

Virtues:
Matchless mother of exiles, you are always raising them up and anointing the poor and the weak.

Victoria
Ego Victoria velox et fortis pugnatrix sum - in lapide pugno, serpentem antiquum conculco.

Victory:
I am Victory, the swift, brave champions I fight with a stone, I tread the ancient serpent down.

Virtutes
O dulcissima bellatrix, in torrente fonte qui absorbuit lupum rapacem - o gloriaa coronata, nos libenter militamus tecum contra illusorem hunc.

Virtues:
Oh gentlest warrior, in the scorching fountain that swallowed up the voracious wolf - glorious, crowned one, how gladly we'll fight against that deceiver, at your side!
Discretio
Ego Discretio sum lux et dispensatrix omnium creaturarum, indifferentia dei, quam Adam a se fugavit per lasciviam morum.

Discretion:
I am Discretion, light and moderator of all creatures - the impartiality of God, that Adam drove away by acting wantonly.

Virtutes
O pulcherrima mater, quam dulcis et quam suavis es, quia nemo confunditur in te.

Virtues:
Fairest mother, how sweet you are, how gentle - in you no one can be confounded.

Pacientia
Ego sum columpna que molliri non potest,quia fundamentum meum in deo est.

Patience:
I am the pillar that can never be made to yield, as my foundation is in God.

Virtutes
O firma que stas in caverna petre, et o gloriosa bellatrix que suffers omnia!

Virtues:
You that stay firm in the rocky cavern, you are the glorious warrior who endures all.

Humilitas
O filie Israhel, sub arbore suscitavit vos deus, unde in hoc tempore recordamini plantationis sae. Gaudete ergo, filie Syon!

Humility:
Daughters of Israel, God raised you from beneath the tree, so now remember how it was planted. Therefore rejoice, daughters of Jerusalem.

Virtutes
Heu, heu, nos Virtutes plangamus et lugeamus, quia ovis domini fugit vitam!

Virtues:
Alas, alas, let us lament and mourn, because our master's sheep has fled from life!

Querela Anime penitentis et Virtutes invocantis
O vos regales Virtutes, quam speciose et quam fulgentes estis in summo sole, et quam dulcis es vestra mansio - et ideo, o ve michi, quia a vobis fugi.

Soul, lamenting, penitent and calling to the Virtues:
You royal Virtues, how graceful, how brilliant you look in the highest Sun, and how delectable is your home, and so, what woe is mine that I fled from you!

Virtutes
O fugitive, veni, veni ad nos, et deus suscipiet te.

Virtues:
You who escaped, come to us, and God will take you back.

Anima illa
Ach! ach! fervens dulcedo absorbuit me in peccatis, et ideo non ausa sum intrare.

Soul:
Ah, but a burning sweetness swallowed me up in sins, so I did not dare come in.

Virtutes
Noli timere nec fugere, quia pastor bonus querit in te perditam ovem suam.

Virtues:
Don't be afraid or run away; the good Shepherd is searching for his lost sheep - it is you.

Anima illa
Nunc est michi necesse ut suscipientis me, quoniam in vulneribus feteo quibus antiquus serpens me contaminavit.

Soul:
Now I need your help to gather me up - I stink of the wounds that the ancient serpent has made gangrenous.

Virtutes
Curre ad nos, et sequere vestigia illa in quibus numquam cades in societate nostra, et des curabit te.

Virtues:
Run to us, follow those steps where you'll never falter, in our company; God will heal you.

Penitens Animo ad Virtutes
Ego peccator qui fugi vitam: plenus ulceribus veniam ad vos, ut prebeatis michi scutum redemptionis. O tu omnis milicia regine, et o vos, candida illa illa ipsius, cum rosea purpura, incitate vos ad me, quia peregrina a vobis exulavi, et adiuvate me, ut in sanguine filli dei possim surgere.

Soul, penitent, to the Virtues:
I am the sinner who fled from life; covered in sores I'll come to you - you can offer me redemption's shield. All of you, warriors of Queen Humility, her white lilies and her crimson roses, stoop to me, who exiled myself from you like a stranger, and help me, that in the blood of the Son of God I may arise.
O Anima fugitiva, esto robusta, et indue te arma lucis.

Fugitive Anima, now be strong: put on the armour of light.

Et o vera medicina, Humilitas, prebe michi auxilium, quia superbia in multis vicis fregit me, multas cicatrices michi imponens. Nunc fugio ad te, et ido suscipe me.

And you, true medicine, Humility, grant me your help, for pride has broken me in many vices, inflicting many scars on me. Now I'm escaping to you - so take me up!

O misera filia, volo te amplecti, quia magnus medicus dura et amara propter te passus est.

Oh unhappy daughter, I want to embrace you: the great surgeon has suffered harsh and bitter wounds for your sake.

Que es, aut unde venis? Tu amplexata es me, et ego foras eduxi te. Sed nunc in reversione tua confundis me - ego autem pugna mea deciam te!

Who are you? Where are you coming from? You were in my embrace, I led you out. Yet now you are going back, defying me - but I shall fight you and bring you down!

Ego omnes vias meas malas esse cognovi, et ideo fugi a te. Modo autem, o illusor, pugno contra te. Inde tu, O regina Humilitas, tuo medicamine adiuva me!

I recognised that all my ways were wicked, so I fled you. But now, you deceiver, I will fight you face to face. Queen Humility, come with your medicine, give me aid!

O Victoria, que istum in cela superasti, curre cum militibus tuis et omnes ligate Diabolum hunc!

Victory, you who once conquered this creature in the heavens, run now, with all your soldiery, and all of you bind this fiend!

O fortissimi et gloriosissimi milites, venite, et adiuvote me istum fallacem vincere.

Bravest and most glorious warriors, come, help me to vanquish this deceitful one!

O dulcissima bellatrix, in torrente fonte qui absorbit lupum rapacem - o gloriosa coronata, nos libenter militamus tecum contra illusorem hunc.

Oh sweetest warrior, in the scorching fountain that swallowed up the voracious wolf glorious, crowned one, how gladly we'll fight against that deceiver, at your side!

Ligate ergo istum, o Virtutes preclare!

Bind him then, you shining Virtues!
tua in omnibus adimplebimus.

Victoria
Gaudete, a socii, quia antiquus serpens ligatus est!

Virtutes
Laus tibi, Christe, rex angelorum!

Castitas
In mente altissimi o Satana, Caput tuum conculcavi, et in virginea forma dulce miraculum colui, ubi illius dei venit in mundum; unde deecetus es in omnibus spolis tuis, et nunc gaudeant omnes qui habitant in celis, quia venter tuus confusus est.

Diabolus
Tu nescis quid colis, quia venter tuus vacuus est pulchra forma de viro sumpta - ubi transis preceptum quod deus in suavi copula preceptit; unde nescis quid sis!

Castitas
Quomodo posset me hoc tangere quod tua suggestio polluit per immundiciam incestus? Unum virum proutuli, qui genus humanum ad se congregat contra te; per nativitatem suam.

Virtutes
O deus, quis es tu, qui in temet ipso hoc magnum consilium habuisti, quod destruxit infernalem haustum in publicanis et peccatoribus, qui nunc lucent in superna bonitate! Unde, O rex, laus sit tibi. O pater omnipotens, ex te fluit fons in igneo amore, perduc filios tuos in rectum ventum velorum aquarum, ita ut et nos eos hoc modo perducamus in celestem Jerusalem.

Castitas
In principio omnes creature viruerunt, in medio flores floruerunt; postea viriditas descendit. Et istud vir preliator vidit et dixit:

Hoc scio, sed aureus numerus nondum est plenus. Tu ergo, patemum speculum aspice: in corpore meo fatigatationem sustineo, parvuli etiam mei deficiunt.

Nunc memor esto, quod plenitudo que in primo facia est arescere non debuit, et tunc te habuisisti quod oculus tuus numquam cederet usque dum corpus meum videres plenum gemmarum. Nam me fatigat quod omnia membra mea in irrisionem vadunt. Pater, vide, vulnera mea tibi ostendo.

Ergo nunc, omnes homines, genua vestra ad patrem vestrum flexite, ut vobis manum suam porrigit.

[Processional]

In the beginning all creation was verdant, flowers blossomed in the midst of it; later, greenness sank away. And the champion saw this and said:

"I know it, but the golden number is not yet full. You then, behold me, mirror of your fatherhood: in my body I am suffering exhaustion, even my little ones faint.

Now remember that the fullness which was made in the beginning need not have grown dry, and that then you resolved that your eye would never fall until you saw my body full of jewels. For it wearies me that all my limbs are exposed to mockery; Father, behold, I am showing you my wounds."

So now, all you people, bend your knees to the Father, that he may reach you his hand.