In St. Paul's Cathedral

Robert A. Rees
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At the annual service of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George

The choir came in followed by the college of minor canons, the prebendaries and the Bishop of London, who, as the official program notes, was supported by the Dean and Chapter (The Dean is Dean of the Order). Next came the Companion of the Order, followed by the Knights Commanders, with Squires carrying Banners, the Knights Grand Cross, The Deputy Secretary, The Gentleman Usher of the Blue Rod, The King of Arms, and a host of regal dignitaries, including The Chancellor (preceded by a Squire carrying his Banner), The Prelate (preceded by his Chaplain),

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The Dean’s Verger,
The Succentor
(The Bishop’s Chaplain bearing the Crozier),
The Bishop of London,
supported by the Dean and Chapter,
The Grand Master’s Banner,
The Lord Mayor Locum Tenens
Bearing the Pearl Sword,
H. R. H. The Duke of Kent
(Grand Master of the Order),
H. M. The Queen
(Sovereign of the Order),
H. R. H. The Duchess of Kent and,
finally, the Queen’s Bodyguard of
The Yeomen of the Guard.

As the procession moved down the nave,
the choir, on reaching Wren’s great Dome, sang
All Creatures of Our God and King.
After the Lesson,
read from Philippians by the Grand Master,
the choir again sang
(lift up your voice and
with us sing)
Blessed are the pure in Heart
after which all knelt in prayer:
Lord have mercy upon us.
   Christ, have mercy upon us.
   Lord have mercy upon us.

Across the street in the small park,
reflected in black mirrors,
a mother dressed in simple blue
nurses her newborn child.

Beneath an ancient mulberry
the chauffeurs stain the pavement
mauve and purple
where they stand.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!