

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation



Minister: Rev Fraser Macnaughton

Tel: 873312

FMacnaughton@churchofscotland.org.uk

Pastoral Minister: Rev. June Freeth

Tel: 721449

JFreeth@churchofscotland.org.uk

Welcome to St Magnus Cathedral this morning. It was

founded in 1137 by St Rognvald, in honour of Magnus, his uncle. The Cathedral belongs to the people of Orkney and its doors are open to all. If you are a visitor, we hope this order of service will help you feel part of our worship together.

SUNDAY 27th September

You can find our Sunday worship here.

<https://www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation/>

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/4fIVEPW39j4>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Opening meditation

In mystery and grandeur we see the face of God.
In earthiness and ordinary things
we know the love of Christ.
In heights and depths and life and death;
The Spirit of God is moving among us.
We are of the earth:
we breathe and live in the breath of ancient plants and
beasts.
Their cells nourish the soil;
we build our communities on their harvest of gifts.
We gather anew to celebrate our common heritage.
May we recall in gratitude all that has given us birth.

A selection of readings from the four gospels... Read by
Kate Richmond

Jesus said..

Therefore do not be afraid of them, because nothing is hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing secret that will not become known.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be afraid of Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

"Have courage, I am he! Do not be afraid!"

"Do not be afraid! Go tell my brothers that they should go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

"Do not be afraid! From now on you will be catching people!"

"Do not be afraid! Only believe, and she will be healed."

"And I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after these things]do not have anything more to do.

"But even the hairs of your head are all numbered! Do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

"Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is well pleased to give you the kingdom.

And when you hear of wars and rebellions, do not be afraid. For these things must happen first, but the end will not come at once."

"Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion! Behold, your king is coming, seated on the foal of a donkey!"

***This is the Gospel of Christ.
May we hear wisdom***

Reflection

Here's a good pub quiz trivia question. How many times does the phrase 'Do not be afraid' occur in the Bible. The answer is over 100! From Genesis through to Revelation, 'Do not be afraid' peppers the scriptures. Jesus himself uses the phrase 16 times in various contexts.

What is it that we are afraid of? Who is it that we are afraid of? Be honest. What are we guarding, hiding, avoiding, or denying? Are we most afraid of death? Pain? Illness and disease? Public speaking? Wrinkles? Are we afraid of losing our job? Our house? Our spouse? An autocratic parent? Does one person have so much power in our life that we are totally afraid of what he or she thinks of us?

Start out with only one fear. We can't cut through all of them at once, so don't try. Where we find our greatest fears, we'll find buried treasure deep below within our psyche.

We begin by bringing this one large fear to mind in a conscious, honest, self-scrutinising manner.

This large fear is a demon in our life, so we might as well face it and get to know it better. Analyse what it exactly is that causes us anxiety. Be very specific. If we are afraid of losing our job, for example, see if we can break our fears down. Are we afraid of losing money? Are we afraid of feelings of rejection?

Are we afraid of admitting defeat? Are we afraid of what our spouse, our parents, our children, our friends, our neighbours will say or think? What are we afraid it is? Are we afraid that we won't get another job and we'll end up living on the street? Are we afraid of the loss of status? Are we afraid of losing our community at work? Are we afraid of losing our job-related identity? Are we afraid that we won't know what to do with our time? Are we afraid that we will have to give up a way of life? Afraid of disconnection, loneliness, boredom, meaninglessness?

Are we so profoundly afraid of being alone that it has crippled us or been instrumental in troubled decision-making? Many of our fears revolve around dependency issues. We want somebody else to face the demons for us.

Then..experience our fears...

One of the ways that we can powerfully get our fears in perspective is to allow ourselves some time to experience our worst fear. For just a few minutes, imagine a worst-case scenario and go there in our mind. Imagine it. Visualize it. Tell oneself that this is what has happened. Don't run away from it. Don't panic. Don't avoid it. Face our fear; see what is unconsciously driving our habitual behaviours in an attempt to avoid the worst. This can allow us eventually to have a new perspective, more freed-up energy, and a new lease on life. . . .

If we are anxious about the possibility that we will end up alone, without a partner, for example, see if we can access this fear. Think about how we can construct a good and satisfying life on our own. The more we can train in learning to "hang in there" with our fears, even for the briefest of moments, the more we grow in breadth and depth. This can help us loosen our attachment to more excess baggage. In this way we open our hearts and allow the world to enter rather than walling it out, which is

what we usually do with inappropriate defence mechanisms and irrational fears.

Next, be willing to experience transformation of our fears..

Too often our fears become nothing more than old familiar habits; they become little more than attachments. As young children, we may have been afraid of crossing the street or going into the basement alone. If, as adults, we hang on to these fears or replace them with ones that are similar, we remain stuck. If we have a fear that is paralysing our growth, it is unlikely that it will be transformed until we are very firm in our resolve and intention to deal with it.

If we want to change and let go of the frightened and dependent person we used to be, we have to loosen our attachments to our current problems. Many things don't require mystical intervention. If we are afraid of our debts and financial problems, for example, see a financial advisor and take practical steps.

Allowing ourselves to experience what we fear can provide the opportunity to meet reality face to face, and in so doing to experience greater freedom, harmony, and oneness with the very things we until then, avoided.

It was for good reason that the biblical writers, over many centuries, again and again exhorted people 'do not be afraid'. In the person of Jesus in particular that came to a point where his message of empowering ordinary people to take control of their fears with the assurance that he was battling for them, really comes home for all of us, whether our fears are great or small.

Prayer

May Holy Wisdom open our eyes, to what we cannot see,
despite our looking.

May Holy Wisdom open our eyes, the Source of All Truth,
to what we refuse to see, despite our need.

for those who are holding too much inside.

May they remember that this near-bursting feeling is the steady growth of their empathy muscle, keeping them alive, keeping them transforming, keeping them committed

to all other living beings, and when this seems overwhelming, when the pressure threatens to crack their own structure, may they remember that our individual task is never to seek to contain it on our own, but to open up and out, fusing with the tendons, muscles, and bones of everyone around us, until we together create larger, sturdier, more flexible systems to share the weight.

for those who were doing fine, then weren't, then were, and now maybe aren't again.

May they continue to listen curiously to the irregular rhythms of their moods, not in an attempt to master the highs or avoid the lows, but rather to become a more agile improviser of their own melody, and may they allow the harmony and dissonance of those around them to give their own tune depth and assurance, because we're all making strange new noises and learning uncomfortable new songs lately, so we might as well make weird, fun, honest music together, and stop trying to do it all alone.

For those who just want a hug.

May they reach out to someone today, through a screen or maybe just a shift of their eyes over the brim of their mask, and invent a new sign of affection, and for just a moment, instead of focusing on the current scarcity of our most common modes of physical contact, may they focus on the abundance of creativity this time requires, have fun with the challenge, and become an inventor of new language, new customs, and newly deepened connection.

May all know love, receive strength, and live in peace. In times of stress and self-doubt may all be upheld, have patient endurance, and the knowledge that even unknowingly, by what they do, they walk in the way of Christ.

Blessing

We have gathered in the knowledge of the tender love of
God

as shown to us in Jesus.

We have gathered in the knowledge of our own need to
experience

that love in each other.
We have gathered in the knowledge
of our desire to listen, to question,
and to share the journey
which is where we live and learn and love.

May you stay safe in the Way of Christ, and may you be
blessed by his Spirit this day and always.