

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation



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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 22nd November

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

https://youtu.be/GvZCvE4a_S4

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Opening meditation

May our thoughts begin with gracious intentions that translate into life-giving words; may these words be articulated into actions that bring together and support. May our actions turn into habits that heal and transform; our habits, then, into character that mark our lives; our character, then, into our destiny. Would we not only be remembered for having contributed to the gentling of our communities, but celebrated now for being salt and light in this often tasteless and drab world.

Reading from Romans 8 read by Kate Richmond

What can we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else? Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus

For the word of God in scripture, For the word of God among us. For the word of God within us. We give thanks

Reflection

One of the hardest things that we are all having to come to terms with as our so called normal lives and lifestyles are disrupted by lockdowns of varying degrees, is having to reflect on the things to which we are attached. Large or small when we find that we are forced to loosen our attachments, this adds to levels of stress we all feel. Which perhaps also allows us to reflect on to what it is we are attached and how we might feel about letting go some of our attachments.

There is a lovely story from Thailand about the abbot of a monastery. The abbot once went on a tour of China, where someone offered him a very beautiful teacup. It was unlike anything he'd ever seen. He thought, 'Oh! The people here have real faith in me, to offer me this beautiful teacup!' And as soon as the teacup was in his hand, immediately he was suffering. Where should I put it? Where is it safe to keep it? He couldn't stop worrying it would break.

Before he had that teacup, he was fine. Once he had it, he wanted to show it off to the people back home in Thailand. He put it in his bag and kept telling everyone to watch out that the teacup didn't get broken. 'Hey! Careful, please!' Everywhere he was watching out for it. He had nothing but suffering. Before, this suffering didn't exist, but now there was the heaviness of having the teacup.'

So he boarded his plane back to Thailand. When he arrived he warned the novices, 'Be careful! Don't let the teacup break! You laypeople, watch out! There's something fragile here!' This went on all the time, suffering because of attachment to the cup.

Finally, one day, a long time later, a novice picked it up and it slipped from his hand and broke. What relief the abbot felt, 'Ah, I am free! Suffering all these years.'

By asking ourselves.. 'what have we not missed, what have we been fine without in the last year' can be a self discovery about being less attached.

Learning the art of letting go of all that stands in the way of our inner development is another way to embrace the mystery and beauty of all of life.

For example, a belief that does not serve the common good, an argument that serves no purpose except saving face, a relationship that is toxic, a grudge that depletes our being. By letting go, we release our inner clutter and cultivate inner spaciousness.

How many peculiar situations do we find ourselves in because we cannot let go of our attachments?

What ingrained beliefs do we have that may be harming our soul because they do not serve the common good? Continue to shine the light of awareness on them.

What are some attachments that you need to let go of? Write them down and give yourself permission to look at them. Embrace any feelings that arise, including those that prompt laughter and tears. Choose one attachment and

create a tender ritual of releasing it to Spirit. Move on to the next attachment when you are ready. With each successive ritual, it becomes easier and easier to let go.

Indian writer Vasant Lad once wrote...

Attachment is the food of the mind.
Attachment is the anchor of the mind.
Through attachment the mind anchors
to many things in this world.

Such a mind is a jailed mind.
Where there is attachment there is no freedom.
Where there is attachment there is no love.
The attachment you feel to a particular outcome
is like a vehicle.

Let the vehicle take you on a journey
but when you arrive, you must leave it
outside the door
and enter the destination alone.

Some have become unhappy with attachment
so they decide to practice detachment.
This detachment is but
another face of attachment.
It is based on control.

The stem of attachment has given rise
to the sprout of detachment,
Both stems spring forth from
the root of ego.

You may have given up outer clinging.
You may practice spiritual austerities.
But have you given up the inner clinging?
The clinging to enlightenment
prevents the transformation you so desire.

You cannot force open the flower
of spiritual freedom.
It blooms on its own accord.
If you force it, it may appear to bloom.
But in reality it is already dead.

Where there is attachment, there is no awareness.
Give complete attention to your attachment.
Apply your whole body, mind, and emotions to it.
A space will open and that attachment will drop by itself
like a mature leaf drops to the ground.

Prayer

We are called to be Church: to create - across
cultural, age and class boundaries – a laboratory of peace,
testing out Christ's vision of community and love as we struggle to live with
our differences.

We are called to be Church: to be a parable of the Kingdom,
allowing the upside-down values of Christ's commonwealth
to nudge us away from the acquisitive and self-regarding attitudes of our day.

We are called to be Church to be a sign of contradiction among the nations,
pointing to hope in the midst of disillusion,
offering non-violent resistance when evil threatens,
accepting loss of prestige or wealth in the cause of justice.

We are called to be Church to be a place of welcome and warmth, where what
is ignored elsewhere may be heard and honoured, where sorrows may be
shared and stories told,
where hard questions may be asked and new ideas greeted with joy.

We are called to be Church to be a community of praise,
cracking open the dry husks of cynicism and despair,
being clowns and jesters for Christ, celebrating the mystery of faith in stillness
and song.

Blessing

May you find moments of laughter and bliss
In the midst of suffering and distress
May you cherish those times and may they sustain you
May you stay safe in the Way of Christ, and may you be blessed by his Spirit
this day and always.