

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 24th January

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/zPcwXwFPpoM>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here. stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Opening meditation

Gospel, Good News, demanding, challenging, subversive, revolutionary. This is the message we preach. This is the story we live. It's not for wimps or for those lacking courage. The call is to stand up and be counted, to put ourselves into the firing line, exactly as Jesus did: going after the big fish, leaving the games behind. Time to step up embrace adulthood break cover and follow Jesus.

Reading Mark 1 14-20 Chris Howard

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee and told the good news that comes from God. He said, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news!".

As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen and were casting their nets into the lake. Jesus said to them, "Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish." Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him.

Jesus walked on and soon saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat, mending their nets. At once Jesus asked them to come with him. They left their father in the boat with the hired workers and went with him.

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

Reflection

One of the characteristics of those who think in western categories is to celebrate the notion of either – or. Influenced by rationalism and driven by the need to make the world manageable and productive, Westerners have been adept at the art of control and categorisation. While these notions and impulses have been important in making our lives and our societies more efficient this has come at a painful price. Efficiency and productivity lead to specialisation and ironically specialisation leads to fragmentation. That we live fragmented lives in dysfunctional communities is evident everywhere in our landscape. Even our carefully structured social institutions, including the political, educational and medical, are groaning under the strain of economic rationalism and a general cynicism.

There has always been something generally wrong with the way humans organise themselves. Sociologically it has always been a divided world between the powerful and those who are powerless. But there is also something particularly wrong with our first world. This world, which was once formed by a theological vision, is now shaped

by an individualistic humanism and materialism. Having thrown off the chains of Christendom, the contemporary world is now struggling in finding its ways in the morass of relativism. And now that the certainties of science are found to be equally wanting and problematical, we find ourselves halting at the edges of cynicism and paralysis.

Harmony and beauty within our lives and within our communities often fail due to this insistence on the duality of self and others. The ultimate solution for generating peace and accord in our relationships and in our world, therefore, lies in seeing that we all are one. Jesus was always respectful to everyone he met, for he knew that we are all capable of becoming a Christ-like one day. No better example is given than, right at the start of his ministry he called ordinary folk to be his disciples. He did not maintain a dual, and therefore erroneous, perception that distinguished between people he deemed worthy of being treated with esteem and people he deemed unworthy. Through recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings, the perceived distance between all beings will shrink and an affirming environment will grow.

The Christian communities of faith by and large, have not been able to resist the powerful cultural forces of our time. Fragmentation, institutional ineptness and uncertainty are common features. Not only do the churches find themselves more and more at the periphery of society, but many Christians are ecclesiastical orphans in the church they still inhabit. As consumers of religious services they have little stake in and commitment to, the religious institutions of which they are a part.

The way forward for the church, weakened as it is and existing in a difficult environment, is less than clear. The way back to a golden age is not possible. Not only has such an age never existed, but a return to the Christendom model is no longer an option. Moreover, this model must not be repeated in the future. In a world where the church has too much power and where church and society reinforce each other, the church becomes a far cry from a servant, a witness and a sacrament of the way of God.

Nor can the church simply turn inward. While the temptation to isolation and self protection becomes particularly acute in times of difficulty, it remains true that the inward looking church becomes a dying church. The church was never meant to live for itself. Moreover, it was never called to be self protective. Nor can it live being afraid of the world. Instead, the community of faith is ever called to live as agents of transformation in our world.

Instead, the church needs to embrace its present vulnerabilities and difficulties. It needs to see itself as the little flock, or the people in the diaspora, or pilgrims on the journey. The church needs to accept its present refugee status and marginalisation. It needs to remind itself again of the call of those very first ordinary folk made by Jesus.

We cannot readily fix our churches or transform our world. But If we replace this spirit of separateness with compassion, much of the friction in human relations will disappear. If we realize that we are all one, then there will be no impulse to jealousy and no room for conflict. There will be no inclination to like or dislike people; everyone will be regarded with the eyes of compassion. Through the eyes of oneness, we are never tempted to say that one group, or one person, is more important or valuable than the other. In our time and place we too are called to faithful service. In the fracturing practice of independent individualism, we are called to Christian community. The blessings of community are gifts to be shared with the world.

Prayer

From shoreline to roadway, net mending to discipleship, fishing to journeying,
sunrise to resurrection,
this is the long view, the story of God begun in one generation and growing through
countless others. A tale of a fisher, becoming the epic of faith. A single word
becoming the word of God. One act of kindness
becoming the movement of justice. The long view, the story of God.

Followers who were fishermen, disciples who were just teenagers, apostles who were
arguing, friends who misunderstood, supporters who were women, missionaries who
were children, witnesses who were foreigners, believers who were doubters. Jesus
found them on beaches, on roadways, up trees, in houses, by lakesides, with the
Romans, in the wilderness.

But each held something he needed for the way of God: a hope, a passion, a longing,
a voice, an anger, a kindness. We are his latest followers: willing, questioning,
enthusiastic, concerned, trusting, worrying.

So be it.

Blessing

May the grace that is eternal wrap our living today and everyday. May the ancient
light that lit the heavens light our living today and tomorrow. May the love that was
born first, and will be the last,
call us into living today and everyday

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

