

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.
Mary Button

SUNDAY 18th April

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/OdJQUVhqR3Q>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Welcome

We bid you welcome, you who are seekers of a new way to live and believe, who find on this page a community, a place to be safe, to remember. We bid you welcome, you who enter this webpage as a homecoming. Whoever you are, whatever you are, wherever you are on your journey, we bid you welcome.

Opening meditation

Nothing is lost on the breath of God,
nothing is lost forever,
God's breath is love,
and that love will remain,
holding the world forever.
No feather too light,
no hair too fine,
no flower too brief in its glory,
no drop in the ocean,
no dust in the air,
but is counted and told in God's story.

Reading from Luke 12 Kate Richmond

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to give me my share of our inheritance." Jesus replied, "Friend, who has set me up as your judge or arbiter?"

Then he told the crowd, "Avoid greed in all its forms. Your life isn't made more secure by what you own—even when you have more than you need." Jesus then told them a parable in these words: "There was a rich farmer who had a good harvest. " 'What will I do?' the farmer mused. 'I have no place to store my harvest. I know! I'll pull down my grain bins and build larger ones. All my grain and goods will go there. Then I'll say to myself: You have blessings in reserve for many years to come. Relax! Eat, drink and be merry!' "But God said to the farmer, 'You fool! This very night your life will be required of you. To whom will all your accumulated wealth go?' "This is the way it works with people who accumulate riches for themselves, but are not rich in God."

**For the truth made known in texts for the wisdom found
on different paths for the hope that leads us on
We give thanks.**

Reflection

As we begin to come out of lockdown and restrictions, how should we begin change our ideas and ideals about things like money and possessions, wealth and power, credit and responsible financial choices, lifestyle and stewardship of the earth, generosity and justice. Instead of asking the question "When will this crisis be over?" should we be asking "How will this crisis change us?"

Jim Wallis, that is the theologian and founder and editor of Sojourners magazine, not the Moderator designate! is convinced that we must reject the reigning idol of the market which has replaced the practice of citizenship with the rituals of consumption. He observes: "Those who question the market 'god' are called heretics and lunatics and are burned at the stake on conservative talk radio." The results of this idolatry: swelling ranks of the unemployed; strained food banks, and soup kitchens; growing numbers of homeless men, women, and children; and the expansion of "the poor" which consisted millions of people.

There is a widespread acceptance of three maxims which have replaced old virtues:

- (1) Greed is good (conspicuous consumption).
- (2) It's all about me (narcissism).
- (3) I want it now (immediate gratification).

Each of these has fed the voracious engines of consumerism and the habit of living beyond our means while amassing incredible debt. They have also led to the deplorable chasm dividing the upper class and superrich from the middle-class and poor. In 2018 the richest 26 people owned wealth equivalent to the poorest half of the world's population. During the Covid pandemic the same people have made billions more.

But instead of despairing, we need to look to things like the Jubilee tradition from Judaism, the wisdom of the Early Church Fathers, and others. Replace "Greed is good" with "Enough is enough" replacing "It's all about me" with "We're in it together"; and replacing "I want it now" with making our choices today in light of the interests of seven generations forward.

Here are some of the changes that folk have been suggesting for years but are even more pertinent today and so are worth repeating.

- Spending money we don't have for things we don't need is a bad foundation for an economy or a family.
- It's time to stop keeping up with the Joneses and start making sure the Joneses are okay.
 - Care for the poor is not just a moral duty but it is critical for the common good.
- The operating principle of and the reality of the economy says that there is enough [for example of food], if we share it justly and equitably.

We need to rediscover our values in relation to a clean-energy economy, a new definition of work, seeing service as a vocation, a new emphasis on the common good, and a conversation about the transformation of government.

We talk a lot and wring our hands a lot about the waning influence of the church in our society, compared to a couple of generations ago. Could that be because we have lost or abandoned the Christian path which cares deeply about the intersection between faith, spiritual practice, public life, and politics.

I can't count the number of times, during this Covid crisis, that somebody has said something to me about old values and lessons that we had somehow forgotten. Sometimes they recall the things they learned as a child from their parents or just the values that seemed to define the community where they grew up but have now disappeared. It's more than nostalgia; it's a feeling of loss. And they can't quite remember when and how they got away from those old values.

But some things are bringing the memory of those old values and lessons back.

"First is the economic crisis itself. From middle-class families in debt up past their ears to CEOs who are finally finding the space for reflection, a fundamental reassessment may be taking place. And, of course, poor and working-class families are just trying to keep from completely drowning under the waves of recession. But many are now asking: is living with such economic aspirations and pressures what we really want, and what will give us the most ultimate satisfaction?

Then there may be a new empathy that emerges from all this for the poor and most vulnerable. All of a sudden many more people are vulnerable, close to the edge or falling over it. The judgments we have made about the poor may be slipping away as we see how fragile life is and how fast and easily things can go wrong, even for a family that is really trying. Hard times that hit middle- and working-class people can sometimes produce more compassion for all those who are most often left out and left behind.

So crisis creates openness and can open us up to learning and, sometimes, relearning, of old values. We are realizing now, for example, that when the economic gaps between us get too big, it is usually not a good thing for a society. Indeed, many of our economic crises have been preceded by great divides between the top and bottom of society. We are also realizing that our neighbours matter, and that our well-being is connected to theirs. Competing with the Joneses could be replaced with making sure that the Joneses are okay. And we might even learn why all of our religious traditions spend so much time talking about the poor and vulnerable — and why their well-being is seen to be one of the best tests of a society's integrity and 'righteousness.' Because when they are forgotten, the social bonds that hold the rest of us will soon be in jeopardy too.

Prayer

We are part of a bigger world than we know. A world not confined by borders or boundaries, check points or immigration zones, customs officers and armed Guards.

For Jesus came amongst us
and broke down the walls of hostility.
Overturned our cultural norms and
set aside our food laws,
so that there was nothing that could separate us from his Spirit or from each other.

The Way of Christ knows no favourites,
does not distinguish between race and colour,

is not limited by creed or denomination,
is not blinkered by prejudice,
is not stuck in one time zone,
is not defined by nationhood,
but is a Way for us all.

The Way of Christ is the Way of love, a power source of ideas,
a liberating influence upon us,
a healing of brokenness,
a Way which accepts us as we are.

When we are puzzled or perplexed,
may we open our minds and hearts to see a way ahead.
When we are confounded by people who seem intransigent, may we open our eyes

to see where they are coming from.
When we are mired by doubts and uncertainties
may our hearts be filled with faith and hope
so we may be the eyes and ears and heart and mind of Christ.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever. Amen.**

Blessing

If here, you have found freedom, take it with you into the world.
If you have found comfort, go and share it with others.
If you have dreamed dreams, help one another, that they may come true.
If you have known love and unity, give some back to a bruised and hurting world.

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