

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 9th May

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/Ke3YIFs3bJc>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Welcome

We enter into this time and this place to join our hearts and minds together
To remember what is most important in life.
To be challenged to live more truly, more deeply, to live with integrity and
kindness and with hope and love,
To feel the company of those who seek a common path,
To be renewed in our faith in the promise of this life,
To be strengthened and to find the courage to continue to do what we must do,
day after day, world without end.

Opening meditation

May every morning be a reminder of God's creation for us of the turning from
dark to light the coming together of all longing into the birth of life. May we
find in this turning moment the opportunity for growth and the hope of
tomorrow

Jesus has given us his life; Jesus has called us his friends.
And so we will share in his calling.
Jesus has made known God's way;
Jesus has chosen us to bear fruit;
And so we will share our resources.
Jesus is among us in joy;
And so we will love one another.

Reading from Leviticus 19 Freya Henderson

God told Moses to tell the entire Israelite community these things: Be holy, for
I, God, am holy. When you reap the harvest from your fields, do not cut the
grain to the very edges of the field, or gather in all the gleanings. Nor are you
to completely strip your vines or pick up the fallen fruit. Leave the extra grain
and fruit for poor people and foreigners to gather for themselves.

From Ruth 2

Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side from the clan of Elimelech.
His name was Boaz, and he was well-to-do. One day Ruth the Moabite said to
Naomi, "Let me go into the fields and be a gleaner, gathering the leftover
grain behind anyone who will take pity on me." And Naomi said, "Go ahead,
my daughter." So Ruth went out to the fields to follow the harvesters and
gather the grain that they dropped. As providence would have it, she came to
the part of the field that was owned by Boaz, of Elimelech's clan.

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen to my words, my child, and accept my offer: don't collect your grain in anyone else's fields but mine; and don't leave here, stay with my binders. Watch them closely, and whatever part of the field they are harvesting, follow behind them. I have ordered all my reapers not to bother you. When you get thirsty, go to the water jars they bring with them and get a drink of water."

**May we be struck by the wisdom of these words
and marked by hearing them.
For within story lies meaning, and
within meaning, the wisdom for which we seek.**

Reflection

This is the time of year when we mark Christian Aid Week. Over many years the charity has produced posters and leaflets, either in print or latterly online which often depict women [and it is invariably women] in a far-off land, bent double in a field. What is she doing? Sometimes sowing seed, sometimes harvesting crops. Quite often, given the theme of poverty, she is 'gleaning'.

There is a famous painting by the nineteenth-century French painter, Jean-Frances Millet, in which two women stand in a field, 'gleaning.' The poor were allowed in to pick up what the rich didn't take. They paid attention to what was left behind.

For us in the rich world, gleaning is an archaic world, redolent of a rural past. Gleaning, the Old Testament practice whereby farmers left an unharvested margin around their fields and the poor came and picked from it, was at the heart of the Book of Ruth. But is gleaning only an ancient agricultural regulation? Or is it, should it be, something more.

In it's contemporary context the word could be making a comeback beyond the agricultural. In some senses gleaning is an environmental practice of some significance. It reduces waste while intensifying pleasure. It magnifies objects because they get to have a second and third life. It's at the heart of recycling.

Some things are just too good to throw away. That's why they end up at the 'white elephant' gift giving of groups at Christmas or at church rummage sales or in car boot sales. They are being recycled, and the practice is not only economic and environmental. It is also spiritual. It says we care. Recycling spent on unwanted goods says we care about not filling the earth up with

junk and that we care about filling up others with tortured vegetables and 'too good to toss' clothing.

At its heart the principle is the same. Gleaning establishes shared spaces; it invites people from the margins into these shared spaces; it cultivates transformation in those spaces by confronting cycles of injustice; it allows nurturing relationships to transform those who work together and sets an example to people to transform the greater community.

Think of the phenomenal success of the Blue Door, and now online outlets like Vinted where you can upload your old clothes for sale, and where they costume beyond the market-niched boutique that displays only one kind of clothes for one kind of person. In the Blue Door everyone gathers to recycle their wares and to recycle their costumed identities as well.

Places like the Chelsea Flea Market or the Barras on any given Saturday morning is a shopper's paradise, especially a shopper who doesn't want the ugliness of box stores or the conformity of the boutiques. There you can shop out of the box. The hunt is as interesting as what happens. We not only save an object from the dust of someone's garage; we also keep it out of the landfill.

Gleaning is an attitude as well as an act. We shop the car boot sales. And we also liberate: we take things out of cupboards and let others have at them. When we clean our attic, we do the same thing. We rescue and liberate from the dustbin. Trash becomes treasure. If attics contain our past, then so be it. Everything, to the gleaner, does not have to have an immediate use. We can rotate uses.

What is spiritual about gleaning is that it carries care. It pays attention to the edges and the corners, the rubbish heaps and the tossed away. It says out loud that vegetables don't have to be perfect to be allowed out in society.

Spiritually, the ugly and almost used up, the snarled squash and the bruised tomato, that are apparently not good enough for display in supermarkets, are the stuff that too many of us are made of. We think of all the people either on universal credit or hoping to get disability benefits. Something broke in them, job security, family breakdown. They fell off a roof or a ladder. They had a car accident. They were hurt in a crime. Now they are no longer perfect and can't be sent to market. Gleaners still care about people like this. Gleaners find use for people whom others think are useless. Gleaners hate to see time or people wasted.

Likewise, gleaners treasure what isn't done at the end of the day as much as what is. We can relieve ourselves of the anxiety of the to-do list. We treasure what remains in the field as much as we like what is picked and used and perfectly so. I decorate our garden with broken shards of terracotta pots to make it more Mediterranean. An old piece of coloured fence from Peedie Breeks Nursery has become a bit of decking. And it all helps the seasons along. Even in seasons without colour, there is colour in the garden.

Gleaning. An old agricultural term that talks of inclusion and care for the poorest in society. But one which can be dusted down and given a new coat of paint and applied to all sorts of contemporary situations.

Prayer

In all our joys and in all our concerns, may we be ever mindful
of the presence of God among us,
and to see the new possibilities of the now.

As lockdown restrictions ease we pray for those who are waking up:
May they trust this bright, shining feeling and share it eagerly with others,
especially those who are still aching to get up and those who are actively
rolling over and going back to sleep. May they deeply appreciate that their
most important imperative now is not to proudly hold their own healthily lit
wick high and out of reach, but to offer it forward to light the wicks that are
struggling to catch fire themselves.

And we pray for those who are feeling uncomfortable:
May they think back on each truly transformative moment of their life and
remember that they were breathtakingly uneasy every time. May they hold
these memories as the reactivating sustenance they need now, especially
whenever they feel overwhelmed, going back into hiding, or clinging to chains
of comfort. And may they listen closely to the pangs, appreciating each as a
very necessary step toward a new kind of freedom, for all and for them.

We pray for those who just don't know how they're feeling:
May they pause and stop trying to name it, appreciating that some moods
completely defy categorisation, remembering that this is not the first time that
the emotional mix inside them has been utterly unclassifiable and that they're
still here to tell those stories. May they listen to themselves a bit more deeply
today, hearing all of the twisty nuances that make them complicatedly,
gloriously human, and may they simply love everything they are.

Amen

blessing

Go and share the freedom of the gospel
that welcomes, embraces
and enfolds the world in love.

In every word and deed
let us live out the gospel in love.

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