

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

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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 20th June

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Welcome

May our days be long
in the land in which we reside and may our souls yearn
for the peace and justice of God.

We join together come to worship,
to place ourselves on the Way of Christ, and to commit our lives
to upholding the principles of the Kingdom.

Opening meditation
All; Let there be light.
Wherever darkness is to be put to flight,
"Let there be light

Meditation

Prayer is choice; choice about where we direct our thoughts and intentions, choice about where we place our hopes and desires, choice to slow down and focus on compassion. We take a moment to still our mind and make the divine choice to come into the presence of this moment.

Prayer is choice. Life is choice. Life is a prayer. As we make moment by moment choices, may we seek the highest good in each situation. When faced with the choice to be right or to be kind, may we choose kindness. When faced with the weight of other people's expectations, may we choose our own conscience.

When faced with the choice to love or to judge, to embrace or to punish, to heal or to hurt, may we choose love.

Let us again listen to the silence of this sacred space.

A space made ready for us by willing hands.

May we recognise in our life the presence, power and light of our soul. May we realize that we are never alone,

Silence

reading from Luke 23 Helen Killeen

Two others were also led off with Jesus, criminals who were to be put to death. When they had reached the place called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there—together with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Abba forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." Then they divided his garments, rolling dice for them. The people stood there watching. The rulers, however, jeered him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself—if he really is the Messiah of God, the Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him. They served Jesus sour wine and said, "If you are really the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was an inscription above Jesus that read, "This is the King of the Jews."

**For the words of God that challenge us,
for the words of God we wrestle with or reject,
for the word of God strong within us,
We give thanks**

reflection

The Power Of Forgiveness

One of the most extraordinary sentences ever uttered must be that of Jesus on the Cross.

“Abba, Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing”

Given the context, these words are seared on our Good Friday memories. But how often do we stop and think what is meant by them?

The context of the crucifixion supposes the ‘they’ Jesus is talking about is the religious leaders in Jerusalem or those who collude with the Roman authorities, or maybe the soldiers ordered to carry out the execution.

But maybe it is more of a parable of the human condition. In other words, the ‘they’ are actually ‘us’. Forgiveness is an acknowledgment of our shared complex humanity.

‘The sun rises on the just and the unjust. . .’

For do we not all move through life hurting others as well as being hurt.
Do we not all move through life hurting ourselves as well as being hurt by others.
And so forgiveness is continuously needed.

So what does forgiveness achieve and allow. Someone once described ‘Forgiveness as the most demanding of all the qualities in our world’. It is also the most essential. We live in a world where cycles of revenge or just plain bitterness and resentment rule in countless encounters from the most private to the most public.

Forgiveness can break those cycles. It allows us to say, ‘I may hate what you have done. I may despise everything about you. But I nevertheless acknowledge that you are a complex human being, as I am, and *I do not wish you harm.*’

“It also lets you say, ‘I hate what you have done — but I want to move forward, if only for my own sake.’

Because by recognizing that when forgiveness is absent, so is self-respect and perhaps self-love.

It is often said that the person we find most difficult to forgive is our own self. Yet, no matter what we have done, reconciliation with ourselves remains just as essential if we are to go forward in our lives in a hopeful and compassionate way. As long as we can't forgive ourselves, we will be shut off from our own respect-and from love.

When the person we need to forgive is ourselves, acknowledging what we have done, making appropriate reparations, learning from it, and valuing all of who we are, will help.

SO what’s to be done?

Here are some pointers.

Recognize that we are capable of learning from every situation that we are in — however painful. Take time to discover what we have learned. Pay conscious attention to positive experiences also. We do 'deserve' them! And practice gratitude for what is good and supportive in our life.

There is no set timetable to the process of forgiveness, especially when there has been a deep betrayal. Forgiveness has its own timetable; but we can make ourselves ready.

Forgiveness happens in small stages. It starts with a determination not to let those past hurts or betrayals dominate our entire existence. So saying something like... 'I will start by thinking more about the present than letting myself go over and over the past.'

It is irrelevant whether the person 'deserves' to be forgiven. We are forgiving to release ourselves at least as much as the other person. And we are forgiving because we can.

Forgiveness does not pretend that something that was wrong is now right. It is not condoning.

Forgiveness is an act of Love that transcends the rational mind and calls on spirit or our highest self — yet has perceptible psychological and physical benefits as stress decreases and tension subsides.

One more thought... forgiveness should not lead to forced reunions. There may be some people we are better never to see, hear from, or even think about.

Sometimes our greatest rage and resentment is directed toward the people we ourselves have hurt or injured. We may believe that making them 'wrong' saves us from feeling bad. It doesn't.

To begin the process of forgiveness, we need to let go of the wish that the other person would understand what they have done and suffer for it. They may never understand. They may never suffer 'enough.' That must cease to be our business. Notions of revenge and hatred weaken us.

Even to begin to forgive strengthens us.

Prayer

When we have hurt others, let's offer apologies unconditionally. But know that an apology is worthless if it is not backed up by a change in behaviour.

When it seems too hard to forgive: Know that 'forgetting' is part of forgiving but doesn't imply never remembering or pretending something hasn't happened. It means living without that person or event being constantly in our mind almost every second of the day. What we learn from a difficult situation, and from the process of forgiving, is worth remembering.

It can be remarkably helpful to imagine that we are putting the person who has caused us harm into a small boat, and that the boat is traveling back out onto the ocean of life. Give it a great heave! Soon it's far out of our range of vision. We are not causing that person harm; we are leaving them to their destiny. We are getting on with our own.

When someone asks us for forgiveness: Accept other people's apologies unconditionally. Let's not expect them to 'suffer more' to make us feel better. In thinking about forgiveness, understand that it offends the rational mind. It is a Divine quality that human beings can and must learn to practice.

blessing

hold lightly to the things of the world, hold fast to the things of faith
held securely in the love of God,

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