

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 27th June

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/Gt5EE8OcAXQ>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Opening meditation

Light candle

May this flame remind us of the light of wisdom.

May the warmth of its glow

remind us of the warmth of God's everlasting love.

Meditation

In the long arc of history, the ever-flowing stream of time, fifteen months seems brief, and we give thanks that our mistakes and any breakdown in our awareness of the Spirit will seem small and passing in the end.

But we are not at the end, or even that place where the river meets the sea.

We are midstream, unable to catch all the grief flowing by.

How can we hold a space for overdue tears, for deep honouring, for tender remembrance that won't feel hurried or belated, inadequate to the need?

May the Spirit the Comforter, help us not to deny or ignore, but to heal and strengthen all people, raise awareness again of our need to reconnect with the Divine, however that might be possible in this new era

Reading

From Matthew 13

When the disciples came to Jesus, they asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" Jesus answered, "The secrets of the kingdom of heaven are for you to know, but not for them. To those who have, more will be given until they have an abundance; those who have not will lose what little they have. "I use parables when I speak to the people because they look but don't see, they listen but don't hear or understand. Isaiah's prophecy is being fulfilled in them, which says, 'You will be ever listening, but never understanding; you will be ever looking, but never perceiving.

Jesus presented another parable to the crowds: "The kingdom of heaven is like the mustard seed which a farmer sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all—it becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come to perch in its branches." Jesus offered them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a baker took and mixed in with three measures of flour until it was leavened all through."

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables. He spoke to them in parables only, to fulfil what had been said through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce things hidden since the creation of the world."

Reflection

It was Rudyard Kipling who wrote. "If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten"

Stories are memorable.
Stories engage emotion.
Stories inspire action and belief.
Stories remind people that they're not alone.
And if that wasn't enough...

Jesus told stories.

A lot of them.

He would tell stories people understood to help them grasp something they didn't understand.

Everybody is a story. Remember when we were children, people sat around kitchen tables and told their stories. I don't remember much about kitchen furniture but I do remember various kitchen tables.

We don't do that so much anymore. Sitting around the table telling stories is not just a way of passing time. It is the way the wisdom gets passed along. The stuff that helps us to live a life worth remembering. Despite the amazing powers of technology many of us still do not live as fully as we might. We may need to listen to each other's stories once again.

Most of the stories we are told now are written by novelists and screenwriters, acted out by actors and actresses, stories that have beginnings and endings, stories that are not real. The stories we can tell each other have no beginning and ending. They are a front-row seat to the real experience. Even though they may have happened in a different time or place they have a familiar feel. In some way they are about us, too.

Real stories take time. We stopped telling stories when we started to lose that sort of time, pausing time, reflecting time, wondering time. Life rushes us along and few people are strong enough to stop on their own. Most often, something unforeseen stops us and it is only then we have the time to take a seat at life's kitchen table. To know our own story and tell it. To listen to other people's stories. To remember that the real world is made of just such stories.

Until we stop ourselves or, more often, have been stopped, we hope to put certain of life's events 'behind us' and get on with our living. After we stop we see that certain of life's issues will be with us for as long as we live. We will pass through them again and again, each time with a new story, each time with a greater understanding, until they become indistinguishable from our blessings and our wisdom. It's the way life teaches us how to live.

When we haven't the time to listen to each other's stories there is a temptation for us to we seek out experts to tell us how to live. The less time

we send together at the kitchen table, the more how-to books appear in the stores and on our bookshelves. But reading such books is a very different thing than listening to someone's lived experience. Because we have stopped listening to each other we may even have forgotten how to listen, stopped learning how to recognize meaning and fill ourselves from the ordinary events of our lives. We have become solitary; readers and watchers rather than shares and participants.

The kitchen table is a level playing field. Everyone's story matter. The wisdom in the story of the most educated and powerful person is often not greater than the wisdom in the story of a child, and the life of a child can teach us as much as the life of a sage.

Most parents know the importance of telling children their own story, over and over again, so that they come to know in the telling who they are and to whom they belong. At the kitchen table we do this for each other. Hidden in all stories in the One story. The more we listen, the clearer that Story becomes.

Our true identity, who we are, why we are here, what sustains us, is in this story. The stories at every kitchen table are about the same things, stories of owning, having and losing, stories of power, of pain, of wounding, of courage, hope, and healing, of loneliness and the end of loneliness. Stories about God.

In telling them, we are telling each other the human story. Stories that touch us in this place of common humanity awaken us and weave us together as a family once again.

Sometimes when I ask people to tell me their story they tell me about their achievements, what they have acquired or built over a lifetime. So many of us do not know our own story. A story about who we are, not about what we have done. About what we have felt, thought, feared, and discovered though the events of our lives. The real story that belongs to us alone.

Stories are someone's experience of the events of their life, they are not the events themselves. After all most of us experience the same event very differently. We have seen it in our own unique way and the story we tell has more than a bit of ourselves in it. Truth is highly subjective.

The best stories have many meanings; their meaning changes as our capacity to understand and appreciate meaning grows. Revisiting such stories over the years, one wonders how one could not have seen their present meaning all along, all the time unaware of what meaning a future reading may hold. Like the stories themselves, all these meanings are true.

Prayer

With eyes and ears open we can encounter the divine in the wonders of the universe, revealed to us through nature. The forebears in faith understood we are created in the divine image, and each one of us reveals something of the divine to the people we meet. Each person we meet also reveals something of the divine to us.

We are sensitive, fragile beings, we need shelter and food, we need water and warmth. The world provides for all our needs and yet so many do not have what they need because some people refuse to share or because some people choose to make a profit or to use fear of violence to withhold the needs of the many.

May the Spirit of Christ help us to change this.

Science and technology are making amazing discoveries every day and yet profit comes before

common sense and the wellbeing of all people.

May the Spirit of Christ help us to change this.

There are more souls on the earth than ever before and yet people feel more isolated than ever, promotion of fear leads to lack of trust, which leads to more isolation and loneliness.

May the Spirit of Christ help us to change this.

May we use the gifts we have been given to share with people, to enable people

and to treat people with fairness and equity.

May the Spirit of Christ help us to change this.

Blessing

Go to live in love,
respecting, honouring and upholding
one another in the Community of God
here and wherever our daily life takes us.
May you stay safe in the Way of Christ,
and may you be blessed by his Spirit this day and always.