

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 18th July 21

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/AJaybGITX0c>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Welcome

Light candle

Let the light we kindle go before us,

Strong in hope,

wide in good will,

Inviting the day to come.

Meditation

We are told that God's ways are not our ways
but that we are made in the image of God.
Surely then, we should try to discern these ways,
to follow them – in God's world
which is also our world.
Our ways of government
often involve
compulsion,
violence,
injustice,
oppression.
God's ways seem to involve
justice,
love in action,
humility,
but how can we, mere humans,
make any difference?
Jesus taught that love is like yeast.
Insignificant amounts
moistened and warmed
gradually transform the whole,
little by little,
an ongoing process.
We have the Spirit's water of life,
the warmth of the light of Jesus,
enabling us, as the yeast,
gradually to make a difference,
taking time,
never succumbing to despondency.
God's time is not our time either.
We must not be impatient,
but play our part,
mostly unobserved,
except by God,
the master baker
who depends on us
for the infinitesimal part of the Kingdom
entrusted to each one.

Silence

I thank my God every time I think of you. In every prayer I utter, as I plead on your behalf, I rejoice at the way you have all continually helped promote the Good News from the very first day. And I am sure of this much: that God, who has begun the good work in you, will carry it through to completion, right up to the day of Christ Jesus. It's only right that I should entertain such expectations about you, since I hold all of you dear—you who are all partakers of grace with me, even when I lie in prison or am summoned to defend the solid ground on which the Good News rests. God knows how much I long for each of you with all the affection of Christ Jesus! My prayer is that your love may abound more and more, both in understanding and in wealth of experience, so that with a clear conscience and blameless conduct you may learn to value the things that really matter, up to the very day of Christ. It's my wish that you be found rich in the harvest of justice which Jesus Christ has ripened in you, to the glory and praise of God.

Reflection

There is a strong element of faith in courage – faith in the truth of who we are and where that will lead us, faith in what we are doing and its importance and value in the lives of others.

As the people of God, we are not simply in the world to worship God and to care for each other as members of the body of Christ. We are called to involvement in the world. One starting point is to recognise that we are very much in the world. The natural world and the gifts of culture sustain us. To both, we also need to make our careful contribution. We are called to both responsible stewardship of creation and the exercise of gifts, skills and abilities which contribute to human and societies well-being.

But there is a sense in which Christians are not of the world. While fully immersed in the world, they seek to resist the worldliness of the world by rejecting its dominant values when these do not accord with the way of Christ. Thus, Christians are always ambivalent. They seek to support the good, but wish to resist the evil in their world and in their own lives.

A big part of that process and our individual and collective role in it is what Richard Rohr the priest and writer calls "falling Upward". It comes slowly, but once it has arrived it carries the clout of a runaway bus. I am talking about the awakening that our world is far from perfect and that those we have looked up to, respected and trusted are less than what we had first thought. It is a

sobering and often bloodying experience to realise that such people's feet are made of clay.

While our experience over this may occur with parents, teachers or partners or other significant adult figures in our early years this rude ripping away of our idealism sooner or later moves to include the church and other Christian institutions. It may in time become the howling wind that also shakes our understanding of God and rocks the foundations of our faith.

The reality is that this is in one way or another inevitable but is part of a living in a way that is demanded of adult men and women. The realistic acceptance of imperfection and of deficiency in themselves, in others and in their most cherished institutions.

This journey from a naive idealism to a sober realism is difficult, painful and sometimes down right dangerous because it can so easily lead to an unspoken despair or a life denying cynicism. None of us enjoys being denuded. And to have our favourite people cut down to size and to have our cherished beliefs overturned seems to threaten us far more than we may have first realised.

But it happens. And more importantly, it needs to happen. It is part of joining the adult world and moving from a Sunday school faith to a more mature faith.

One of the difficulties in this transitional process is that we tend to see the imperfections in others long before we see them in ourselves. As a result, we feed our arrogance, jeopardise relationships and abandon institutional commitments.

Our contemporary context reinforces these observations in that many people are exiting the church because it fails to meet their expectations and needs. When the church is seen as the provider of religious goods and services, and we are seen as mere recipients, then this commercial arrangement can easily breakdown and we go shopping elsewhere.

The maturing of our faith and our experience of life and its institutions, including the church, need not bring us to a place where we throw the baby out with the bath water. A mature faith is a tested faith that has faced the probing questions of doubt.

But a mature faith is also a humble faith that has dared to look inward in order to uncover and face the demons within. It is a faith that acknowledges our own weakness and fragility and our sheer dependence on grace and love.

Such a mature faith becomes a tolerant faith. Not tolerant regarding the changes that are needed in our lives, the church and the world, but a faith that joins hands with others on the road to renewal rather than a faith that blindly blames others for their failures.

A mature faith can face the hard journey in hope and love towards personal and institutional change without demanding instant solutions. A hard notion in this world and contemporary society in which we live, where instant solutions and gratifications are the order of the day.

The defining core of courage is love. Without love, courage is not possible. Acts of bravado, yes – but true courage is the natural outgrowth of our love of all that we hold dear, of the preciousness of each human life and a deep belief that what we love matters. Without love, there is nothing at stake, nothing to fight for.

Such a mature faith accepts that we are all walking on the way of Christ and that his spirit has a persistent involvement in our lives and the world. Empowered by the Christ who journeys with us, we may pray and work even when little seems to change.

prayer

Our world, is in desperate need of love. We wake each day to news stories of a world torn apart by conflict, war and persecution. May our love for one another, inspired the Spirit, bring an end to this pain.

Within minutes, even seconds, we see our world in need of love. Our air is choked with fumes, our land and sea polluted with plastics and chemicals. May our love for our environment bring an end to this pain.

In our streets, behind closed doors, we see children in need of love. Children and adults being abused physically, sexually and psychologically in their own homes. People being abused in the same ways in their workplace. People being trafficked or sold as sex slaves. May these evils be stopped, may the victims know that they are loved.

May the Spirit enable us to be agents of justice— to speak out and stand up against these sins. May our love for the suffering bring an end to this pain.

In homes, hospitals and hospices, we know of people journeying with illness

or preparing to die. May the Spirit of love, be with those who are sick,
be with those who are afraid of what lies ahead,
be with healthcare professionals and family members
who lovingly care for the sick at this time.
May their love for the sick, bring comfort in this time of pain.

blessing

While so much of the road ahead is uncertain,
the path constantly changing,
we know some things that are as solid and sure
as the ground beneath our feet,
and the sky above our heads.

We know God is love.
We know Christ's light endures.

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