

## **St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall**

[www.stmagnus.org](http://www.stmagnus.org)

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

[www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation](https://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.

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You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/q-hqxIZq7ok>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

[stmagnuszoom@gmail.com](mailto:stmagnuszoom@gmail.com)

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

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.

When long before time and the worlds were begun, when there was no earth and no sky and no sun, and all was deep silence and night reigned supreme, and even our maker had only a dream. The silence was broken when God sang the song, and light pierced the darkness and rhythm began, and with its first birth cries creation was born, and creaturely voices sang praise to the morn. The sounds of the creatures were one with their Lord's, their harmonies sweet and befitting the word; the singer

was pleased as the earth sang the song, the choir of the creatures re-echoed it long. Though down through the ages the song disappeared, its harmonies broken and almost unheard, the singer comes to us to sing it again, our God is with us in the world now as then.

### Reading

Luke 16 19-31

Jesus told them a story. "Once there was a rich person who dressed in purple and linen and feasted splendidly every day. At the gate of this person's estate lay a beggar named Lazarus, who was covered with sores. Lazarus longed to eat the scraps that fell from the rich person's table, and even the dogs came and licked Lazarus' sores. One day poor Lazarus died and was carried by the angels to the arms of Sarah and Abraham. The rich person likewise died and was buried. In Hades, in torment, the rich person looked up and saw Sarah and Abraham in the distance, and Lazarus resting in their company. " 'Sarah and Abraham,' the rich person cried, 'have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am tortured by these flames!' But they said, 'My child, remember that you were well off in your lifetime, while Lazarus was in misery. Now Lazarus has found consolation here, and you have found torment. But that's not all. Between you and us there is a fixed chasm, so that those who might wish to come to you from here can't do so, nor can anyone cross from your side to us.' "The rich person said, 'I beg you, then, to send Lazarus to my own house where I have five siblings. Let Lazarus be a warning to them, so that they may not end in this place of torment.' But Sarah and Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let your siblings hear them.' 'Please, I beg you,' the rich person said, 'if someone would only go to them from the dead, then they would repent.' 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets,' Sarah and Abraham replied, 'they won't be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead!'

### Reflection

In today's society, money fascinates and frightens us. It is both totem and taboo. Money is on our minds, money drives our decisions, international and personal, everything has its price: its monetary equivalent, but we are as secretive about our finances as we are about anything. We don't like being asked about what we earn, how we spend, or what we give and we strenuously resist being held accountable. We all have our own barriers for resisting what we don't want to hear and these seem to be particularly well honed with regard to money.

Yet Jesus talked more about money than about any other subject precisely because of our ability to deify it (he even gave it a god's name – Mammon). So how can we talk about money in a way that allows us to be more open and more free? What are the questions we need to ask ourselves to encourage an honest sharing?

We often say that poverty is the problem but is the problem not in fact wealth and the decisions made by the wealthy? The church can and does preach about poverty and few take exception, but when it preaches about wealth, the barriers are quickly raised.

People need a safe place to explore their attitudes to money. People also need the opportunity to engage with the biblical relevance for modern society. The mystique of world economics also needs unveiling. For too long, we ordinary folk have been convinced that we need to leave money issues to the “experts” and we have been loath to challenge their views for fear of appearing foolish.

Remember that one in ten of the gospel verses is about money related matters. But for much of our lives we live without reference to the ones on money.

Jesus said: “ I have come that they might have life and have it to the full”.

I finish by inviting you to think about what “life in all its fullness” might mean for each family described in the following cases.

These are not easy question. These are difficult issues. Well worth contemplating.

#### **Case study A: told by Penny**

Penny, Michael and three children live in Newcastle. She says " I have lived on benefits for 14 years. I always felt that it was my place to be at home and bring up my children. I had a small, part-time job in a playground. Michael’s got a full-time job. The first month that Michael moved in we got approx.£360 in wages, plus Family Allowance of £25 per week and a maintenance payment of £240 per month.

We no longer qualified for free school meals or for a grant for my daughter. By the time we were told we would have to pay full rent we already owed £400 and £180 in Council Tax.

We weren't allowed to take advantage of the back to work grant which had built up from maintenance payment while I was on Income Support, because it wasn't me who had the full time job. So we had a month of living on £25 per week (Child Benefit) because we didn't get paid until the end of the month and it took two weeks for the Working Families Tax Credit to be sorted out.

By the time things were sorted out we already owed money. After four months Michael’s job ended. We had to live on the weekly £104 Working Families Tax Credit and £25 Child Allowance with £240 per month maintenance. So we couldn't apply for Jobseeker's Allowance. We were still paying full rent and council tax and the arrears on all the other bills. When we could eventually apply for Jobseeker's Allowance, council tax benefit and a rent rebate we were told that it would take at least six weeks to sort out. In the meantime we had to try to pay the full rent and council tax. My feelings are that we will never get out of this benefits trap and God knows when we will catch up on all the bills."

## Case Study B: the Omar Family

The Omar family live in Kenya; they are part of a small Muslim community in Machakos, a small town about 50 miles south of Nairobi.

Selma is a single parent with one son, Abubakah (aged 7) as well as her orphaned nephew Alfhan (aged 6). There is also a dependant sister Maryam. They live in a small mud room which is about 8 ft by 10 ft and each has a small suitcase for their clothes piled on the table in the corner of the room.

Daily life is a precarious balancing of budgets. Selma has to go to the local pump to buy water, which she uses for both drinking and washing. A jerry can costs about 3p to fill. They usually manage one meal a day of maize or rice and supplement it with green leaves from the growing green bean plants. She has a small garden at the side of their house, which she describes as illegal as the area is zoned as urban; nevertheless she continues to grow vegetables there as she said that without it, they would have no food on many days.

Selma lives rent-free because she looks after the compound for the owner; she also collects the rent from the other tenants. Her only income is from making and selling “chips” – a potato fritter which she sells at a penny a piece on the local street corner. She can only do this after 4pm as health and safety regulations were concerned with hygiene levels.

She loves the area where she lives as she is well known and feels safe there. Her dream is to own a small farm on the hillside where she could work the land and build a small house for herself and the boys. She would also love for the boys to go on to secondary education but this is unlikely as the fees are so high. She managed to find a trust to pay for Maryam’s education as she had done so well in primary school and Selma hopes that she can do this again when the boys reach the right age.

## Prayer

We come with our prayers for the world and for ourselves.

The Spirit of Christ is present in all places at all times. Present in the halls of power, in the school room, in the workplace, in the operating theatre, in the shopping mall, in the living room. There is nowhere that his Spirit is not present.

May we have his eyes, that we might see as he saw and then have the courage to act and speak as he has taught us to.

Where we see conflict and violence may we work for peace and reconciliation. Where we see human rights violations may we work for justice. Where we see isolation and loneliness may we work to eradicate it. Where we see inequality of any kind may we work to bring change. May each one of us

find a way to bring change to our world, that love and care would flow freely and that all people may know of the power of love. May we be his eyes and ears, his hands and his voice, bringing his Way closer than ever before.

**Blessing**

May we walk Jesus way together with him in our midst.  
Our hands are open to receive, our hearts are open to give  
Our minds long to learn  
And our souls reach out to each other  
trusting that Love surrounds us each moment of every day.

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