

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.

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/2y1sWeDmZlg>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

We gather because we can, in our own places, yet as one. Beyond us our words are heard, our worries shared, our questions spoken, within God, for there they find their place of hearing is shared with the depths of love.

Love, love, love.
It's all we ever talk about
from pulpit to pew,
in prayer and poetry,
in song and Scripture.

Love, love, love.
It's all Jesus ever talks about
as he walks around
healing and holding,
calling and comforting,
chiding and challenging.

Love, love, love.
It's all our story is about
from before time started ticking
to the timeless mystery of beyond,
from a call to desert wanderings
to a garden bursting with life.

Love, love, love.
It's all God is about.
And to know love,
to show love,
to give love,
all we need is God.
God is all we need.

Let us now make silence
the place to meet our past and future

A Reading from LUKE chapter 12

A man in a crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to give me my share of what our father left us when he died."

Jesus answered, "Who gave me the right to settle arguments between you and your brother?"

Then he said to the crowd, "Don't be greedy! Owning a lot of things won't make your life safe."

So Jesus told them this story:

A rich man's farm produced a big crop, and he said to himself, "What can I do? I don't have a place large enough to store everything."

Later, he said, "Now I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, where I can store all my grain and other goods. Then I'll say to myself, 'You have stored up enough good things to last for years to come. Live it up! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.' "

But God said to him, "You fool! Tonight you will die. Then who will get what you have stored up?"

"This is what happens to people who store up everything for themselves, but are poor in the sight of God."

Reflection

Our world is built on anxiety. Financial companies urge us to set aside enough money for our retirement, scaring us with the prospect of poverty. We are pressured to earn enough to maintain a certain standard of living. We are encouraged to buy consumer goods that we don't really need. What is prudent saving for the future and what is excessive accumulation of things? Jesus tells us that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. Of what then do our lives consist?

Once upon a time there was a dad who had made a lot of money in the stock market (he had also made a lot of money in the commodity markets too). For every pound he had invested in 1994, he now had five pounds.

Starting with a rather modest amount of money, he had become a millionaire. However, he was not the kind of person who could make his investments and stick with them because he knew that in the long run they would continue to grow. Quite the contrary, he was a real investor, that is to say, he bought and sold stocks almost every day to make money even more rapidly than did the ordinary investor who left it to his brokers and advisers to watch the daily opportunities.

Our hero earned his living - and it was a good one - in other areas. However, he became obsessed with the daily fluctuations in the market. He exulted when his holdings went up and grew depressed when they went down. He called up the Footsie Index on his computer several times every day and then explored his portfolio in detail.

WELL, he went on holiday with his family to Orkney and of course brought his laptop along. It happened to be one of those times when the FTSE rose and fell like the tides. So he spent most of his daylight hours on his laptop. As a result he completely wasted his holiday, even though the weather was beautiful every day, the views were spectacular, there were loads of sights to see, the winds were light, and everyone else in his family had a wonderful time.

It is always later than we think, Jesus warns us this morning. Even if we are not going to die tonight, we are going to die.

The parable of the farmer challenges us to look at our lives and to consider our attitude towards our possessions. No matter how great our wealth, we cannot take it with us. Our fame, our influence, our possessions, our accomplishments will soon pass and be forgotten. We must therefore seize the opportunity to make of our lives what we can. Before it is too late. The prospect is scary, but it is also reassuring. We still have time, some time. Not as much as we would like to have, but still enough. What are we going to do with it?

If God is the source of our security, what does it mean to live this with a radical faith and trust? How does it shape our relationships? Our relationship to possessions? How do we imagine life changing, what new freedom and generosity might our life take on, as we become more and more able to trust in the presence and power of love?

Prayer

May the presence of God be felt in the troubled places of the world....
May the presence of God be felt among those who are suffering for what they believe....
May the presence of God be with those who need encouragement because they are sick, or lonely, or depressed, or have great problems to deal with....

We pray for right relationships with one another
so we can be an example of God's community.

May all find a welcome among the people
who profess to know God's love.

We pray, too, for systems that exclude,
for neighbourhoods that are built on fear,
for people who live with prejudice,
and for communities broken apart.

May we act as a loving community,
and find a creative space for every person.
May the presence of God be with us this week,
so that we may be present for those who need us to listen, or to act, or to encourage.

Blessing

When the good news is difficult to see may we hold on in faith,
may we journey in the hope that horizons come and new vision is seen.

When the good news is difficult to see
may we trust the love of God to reshape us, renew us, revive us.

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