

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/-gMfoXFvCOg>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

We sing and dance with the crowds as we enter the city, joyfully we share the light of God that is among us.

Gathering meditation and a time of Silence

In our tradition the time of rest begins with the lighting of a candle. In this moment the stopping truly begins. To take a few breaths, to allow the mind to quieten. This is the beginning of sacred time.

He knows.

And chooses so anyway.
He knows how fickle our love,
how fleeting our kindness.
We reject what we most deeply desire,
condemn what we most deeply need.
Our glory and our ruin both clamour.

Into that very wound he rides,
into the deepest divide of our souls.
On the Scorned Way—
into the scorn itself—he rides.
Into the choice between love and the way of the world,
and into our failure to choose well, he rides,
having chosen.

To prevail in the battle between good and evil,
between love and fear,
one must embrace them both
and enter the cleft
and still choose.

Worship the One
who embraces our beauty and our woundedness,
who forgives the failure of our worship.
Come with him on the Foolish Way,
the Way of Love,
...and fail... and be forgiven... and come again.

Reading

Matthew 21 7-17

After the disciples laid their cloaks on the animals, Jesus mounted and rode toward the city. Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while some began to cut branches from the trees and lay them along the path. The crowds—those who went in front of Jesus and those who followed—were all shouting, "Hosanna to the Heir to the House of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Most High! As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole

city was stirred to its depths, demanding, "Who is this?" And the crowd kept answering, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee!" When Jesus entered the Temple, he drove out all those who were selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling doves. He said to them, "Scripture says, 'My house is called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of thieves!" Those who were blind or couldn't walk came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. When the chief priests and teachers of the Law saw the wonderful things Jesus did, and heard the children shouting "Hosanna to the Heir to the House of David!" throughout the Temple area, they became indignant. "Do you hear what the children are shouting?" they asked him. "Yes," Jesus replied. "Have you never read, 'From the mouths of children and nursing babies, you have brought forth praise?'" After leaving them, he went out to Bethany to spend the night.

Reflection

The portrait of Jesus in the Gospels has proven to be something of a conundrum for interpreters through the years. What we see is the Jesus in a violent rage driving animals and people out of the Temple. Years ago Bruce Barton, in a very popular book, *The Man Nobody Knows*, used the story to demonstrate how virile this Jesus was. He surmised that the Jesus was capable of Herculean strength and prowess because of his outdoorsy lifestyle and vigorous walking missionary tours. However, others have been concerned that this public demonstration which had all the earmarks of a near riot was most unbecoming of the normal life style of Jesus. Also, if this were a pique of temper, could not someone accuse Jesus of being guilty of sin?

Our search for the ways Jesus expresses and experiences anger has revealed a human being who radically exudes integrity, strength, and vision, one who models confidence in his mission, indignation over injustice, and love in the midst of aggravation. Throughout the gospel accounts, Jesus's demonstrations of anger reveal his authenticity. He doesn't play games. He isn't passive-aggressive or obsequious. He doesn't stuff his anger, holding it in until the breaking point. Rather, he is clear and direct and utterly righteous in his anger.

We've gleaned some answers to the questions that confronted us:

Jesus demonstrates different kinds of 'anger, ranging from pique and frustration to exasperation and furious righteous indignation. Anger can be destructive or constructive, harmful or holy. Jesus models a way to express anger in ways that can be illuminating as well as instructive.

Jesus expresses anger in direct, honest ways. He will not be swayed from his mission. He is bold and clear in his message. He responds to attacks directly. Sometimes he uses anger to try to shake some spiritual sense into others, though often he realizes the effort is useless, so he expresses his judgment of hypocrisy, greed, and self-aggrandizement, particularly of those who are charged with the care of the souls of the people. Jesus states his case unambiguously in spite of opposition.

He makes no personal attacks, but seeks to uncover the evil behind the actions. There is no record of Jesus being angered by a personal offence no matter how wrong, unjust, or violent it may be. He teaches that the one who is persecuting us is also created in the image of God and is loved by God, and in that reality we can love our enemy. At the same time, just as he is righteously angered over oppression and injustice, so should we be.

Jesus's mission is to liberate human souls, to draw them into the Way of Christ, into a loving, selfless way of life. He is after what matters — and so he reveals dishonesty, fights injustice and subjugation, causes change, sets things right. Undergirding every expression of his anger is love; Jesus speaks the truth in love. In every case the anger of Jesus is the passion of love. His love of God, his zeal for the ways of his teachings, his mission to open the way of Christ to all, together make him indignant at whatever is dishonourable and whatever impedes others from knowing and experiencing the divine presence. He is honest with his feelings, expresses them as directly and transparently as possible, and moves on.

Jesus responds to anger in others by calmly explaining his position. He possesses an unshakable force of honesty and truth. He stands up to angry attacks without getting drawn into fierce, thoughtless encounters. He understands that one's anger is often caused by fear, and takes that into account when he is the object of a violent outburst. He is transparent in his response to every challenge, and refuses to yield his position. He explains who he is and what he is about with utter openness and outspokenness.

Jesus's teachings regarding anger overturn our assumptions. If you are persecuted, if you are the focus of others' anger for righteousness's sake, then you are blessed, he tells us, so be joyful. If you are angry with a brother or sister, deal with it and be reconciled — make that a priority even before worship. He teaches a model of peaceful nonviolence that many throughout history have attempted to follow, even today. He recognizes that there is a place for righteous anger, as he himself has shown, but he urges us to be angry, without causing harm or seeking destruction. And he tells us there can be a cost for making such a righteous stand. Nevertheless, he encourages us to live a life of pure, authentic love and integrity.

God is love; Jesus is love; the anger of Jesus and all holy anger is the anger of love. For love is not wholly sympathy and sweetness; love is full of indignation and wrath.

Prayer

The healer touching all sorts
responding to the leper
forgiving the prostitute
going into the rooms of the dead
and bringing life back to the forgotten
The woman with the blood flow
The daughter of Jairus
The man by Siloam's pool
The beggar by the roadside

The table turner
ruining the tradition of centuries
of sacrifice and purity
of paying the temple tax
and being set free from sin
Den of robbers
Place of thieves
This should be a house of prayer
Table turner

The saviour
a prisoner without a crime
who takes love where it is often found
at the edge of death
for the sake of others
suffering
in the name of others
Crucify
Bread breaker
We want Barabas
King of the Jews

The resurrection and the life
on a beach at dawn
cooking fish in the sunrise
watching the disciples
take on the look of surprise and faith
Stone roller
I will not believe until I see
Ghost walker
Fish fryer
Jesus
The Christ

Blessing

Let us go gladly on our way as those who have recognised the Palm Sunday
man as the key to the healing of the world.

Let us translate our hosannas in the language of daily loving, that each
task and each person may receive the best we can offer in those
circumstances.

Hosanna! Wonderful is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

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