

## **St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall**

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

[St Magnus Cathedral Facebook page](#)

Minister: Rev Fraser Macnaughton Tel: 873312  
**[FMacnaughton@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:FMacnaughton@churchofscotland.org.uk)**  
Pastoral Minister: Rev. June Freeth Tel: 721449  
[JFreeth@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:JFreeth@churchofscotland.org.uk)

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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 on Facebook](#)

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

or [on YouTube here](#)

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

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. We are called into a season of revival. May we lay down traditions that bind us, and carry afresh those truths that free us to follow, as we leave our boats on the shoreline to follow Jesus we are called into a world of questions. May we let go of those well-worn and easy answers, and discover a faith of passionate inquiry as we

leave the ballast on the beach and follow Jesus  
We are called into a time of renewal. May we leave behind the beliefs  
and actions that no longer fit our present faith as we leave the  
driftwood at the tide-mark and follow Jesus  
We are called into a life of justice. May we turn our backs on a way of  
living  
that binds others with injustice, as we leave the debris in the seaweed  
and follow Jesus

Reading  
Proverbs 28

A faithful person is showered with blessings,  
but the get-rich-fast types will not go unpunished. It's never good to  
judge by appearances— anyone who's hungry enough can be pushed to do  
wrong. The greedy pursue wealth eagerly, unaware that poverty is waiting  
in the wings. Those who reprimand are respected more in the end than  
those who use their tongues for flattery.

The greedy stir up strife, but those who trust in Yahweh will enjoy  
prosperity. One who trusts one's own mind trusts a fool;  
walking in wisdom is safer. Those who give to the poor will never want;  
those who close their eyes to them are cursed. When the wicked rise,  
others hide; when they fall, the upright flourish.

Reflection

The other day at the swimming pool, I overheard a mother say to her  
very young daughter ahead of her lesson, "if you can put your head under  
the water today, we will go and buy something". to which the youngster  
responded..

'ohhh - buy something'

As a species, we need to be strong to resist the onslaught of myths of progress, consumerism, and consequent degradation.

Thomas Berry writes about the roles of the warrior and hero in the Native American consciousness. The Indians have never accepted human life as ordinary, as something that can be managed in a controlled or painless manner. They realized that life tests the deepest qualities within the human personality, qualities that emerge in heroic combat not merely with others, but also with oneself and with the powers of the universe. The sacred function of enemies was to assist one another to the heroic life by challenge, even by the challenge of death. The existence of challenges instead of mere comforts and acquisition of comforts is what brings alive the warrior in us.

Today, with so many 'enemies' confronting us internally and externally — greed and envy, violence and self-pity, fear and sloth, is it any wonder that the return of the spiritual warrior is called for? Fasting, service, and other generous acts of giving to the community such as mentioned by Jan Nunn are all ways to develop warriorhood. The warrior takes on enemies, both internal and external.

A warrior defends what is beautiful; a warrior defends Creation and its light; a warrior defends what the community cherishes; a warrior assists the community to survive. A warrior's heart must be strong but also creative; it must be connected to the whole; it must know quiet and solitude as well as busyness and engagement. It must know service as well as sacrifice. In short, it must know spirit.

We are besieged by the violence of our culture and its cultural institutions instructs us to take for granted from an early age that all warriorhood is about killing for the empire or the nation or the corporation or even for our religions. The very term 'warrior' to most people smacks of the military.

But things like the War on Poverty is not military. Nor has it always been the case. One Native American who had been a soldier in the Vietnam War, returned home to his tribe. His elders said to him: 'You have been a soldier. Now we will make you a warrior.' His training to be a warrior took four years. What was at the heart of this training. The elders taught him to play the flute, which he learned to do very proficiently. When they felt he was ready to play before the whole tribe, everyone gathered. As the evening came to an end, and all were touched by his playing, each

elder came up to him with a knife in his hand and cut a chunk of wood out of his flute. At the end of the evening, he had no flute. To quote medieval mystic Meister Eckhart 'the soul grows by subtraction,'

Spiritual traditions the world over embrace the archetype of warriorhood, for it takes a stout heart, a determined mind, a focused intention, a *very awake person*, to be a successful warrior. A warrior defends what he or she cherishes when it is threatened. A warrior is a lover defending the beloved. A prophet is a warrior — the energy of the prophets of Israel was very much a warrior energy. A warrior responds to moral outrage, feels injustice in the gut like a kick to one's solar plexus, and responds with ingenuity and creativity. It may be that not only our nation-state and corporate state worldviews have limited our understanding of warriorhood but also our sexism. A patriarchal culture needs to deny women their warriorhood, deny women their masculine and assertive role.

'Femininity,' being 'ladylike' and going shopping and doing homemaking without any option — all this is part of putting down the inherent warriorhood of women. It serves the purposes of entrenched power to teach people to stifle their spiritual warriorhood and channel its energy exclusively to soldierhood or war-making on behalf of the powerful.

St. Teresa of Avila was a spiritual warrior — she took on the established church of her day, outmanoeuvring the powerful Inquisition itself, and the privileged classes who were quite literally dumping their unmarried daughters into convents, convents which she committed her considerable energies to cleaning up. By so doing, she took on powerful forces in sixteenth-century Spain. She did not flinch. She was a warrior.

Hildegard of Bingen was also a spiritual warrior, taking on as she did many powers of her day, including bishops, archbishops, abbots, merchants, clergy, and even the pope. No shrinking violet there. No introspective conscience rotting on the inside, no passive/aggressive Christian who is sentimental on the outside but violent on the inside, Hildegard called her sisters and others to their noble roles to fight injustice and embrace compassion.

The "war" on poverty, on injustice, on oppression, is a daunting "fight". As we shortly sing our last hymn, think on these things for we are like the Christian soldiers in the song.

### Prayer

We pray for all Christian people. Inspired by the example of Jesus, may we spread the good news everywhere. We pray for all in authority in the world. Inspired by the example of Christ, may we listen to the Word of God and respect the conscience of all people.

We pray for those whose work depends on Nature: farmers and fishers; inspired by the example of Jesus, may we respect Nature, learn to read its signs and use its benefits wisely.

We pray for people who feel lost, without a sense of direction, ignorant of their spiritual resources; with a concern for those around us and those whom we know this morning; especially any who are bearing a secret burden or pain;

We are called to follow Jesus. May we grow in love, and so spread the good news of his Way to all whom we meet Amen

### Blessing

Let us avow by our words and intentions  
never to stultify love at its source,  
but by our dialogue, here and hereafter,  
always to value and never to force.

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