

[St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall](#)

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

[St Magnus Cathedral Facebook page](#)

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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 on Facebook](#)

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

or [on YouTube here](#)

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

For gathering today in this sacred space,
we light the flame.

For the opportunity to be together as a community,
to remember the past,
to claim our future, to be alive in our present,
we light the flame

Let's just spend a moment or two in quietness. Consider the bareness of trees awaiting spring's warmth, the first snowdrops to emerge and flower, fallen leaves from winter that now are taken up once again by the soil as a source of nutrients, nature's endless cycle of life and death, signs of life within our own gardens as plants that seemed dead just a month ago are now beginning to show green.

Morning has given us its soft consolations; the day's possibilities now unfolding; our minds and egos again whirring and whirling with both the burden and necessity of freedom and imagination. We are quieted by the preciousness of life and the incomprehensible majesty of all that is seen and unseen - with stars, moon and sun so surprisingly evident. The wilderness of curiosity stirs within us and invites us to:

-celebrate tender memories; promote flickering possibilities; foster endless connections; shed smouldering petty grudges and resentments; overturn the cruelty of withheld words into expressions that guide, soften and encourage;

Amen

Reading from Mark 1: 29-39

Upon leaving the synagogue, Jesus entered Simon's and Andrew's house with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told Jesus about her. Jesus went over to her, took her by the hand and helped her up, and the fever left her. Then she went about her work. After sunset, as evening drew on, they brought to Jesus all who were ill and possessed by demons. Everyone in the town crowded around the door. Jesus healed many who were sick with different diseases, and cast out many demons. But Jesus would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew who he was. Rising early the next morning, Jesus went off to a lonely place in the desert and prayed there. Simon and some companions managed to find Jesus and said to him, "Everybody is looking for you!" Jesus said to them, "Let us move on to the neighbouring villages so that I may proclaim the Good News there also. That is what I have come to do." So Jesus went into their synagogues proclaiming the Good News and expelling demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

Reflection

Once upon a time, three ministers were talking about prayer, in general, and about the appropriate positions for effective prayer, in particular. As they were talking, the local BT technician came into the room to work on the phone system. One minister insisted that the key to prayer was in the hands. She told the others that she always held hers hands together and pointed them upward as a form of symbolic worship. The second minister suggested that real prayer was to be conducted on the knees. The third minister said that he always prayed while lying face down on the cold cement floor of the manse basement.

At this point the technician interjected, "Well, I remember the most powerful prayer I ever made. I was at the top of a power pole, installing a new phone line and something went wrong. Before I could catch my breath, there I was, hanging upside-down by my boots, 40 feet in the air."

A frivolous tale but it illustrates the truth of the need for the kind of prayer and reflection that feeds and nurtures, the kind of prayer that is more than a habit, but rather, is a way of life.

Artists and writers, for example, know that the creative task involves much more than merely 'sticking to it' or 'getting things done'. Many years ago, when the great painter Michelangelo was working on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, one of the priests in charge of the project came into the chapel and said, "Sir, we are not paying you to twiddle your thumbs, please get to work! We have a deadline you know!"

To this, the artist replied, "When I pause the longest, I make the most telling strokes with my brush!" Clearly, Michelangelo knew something about the necessity for re-creation amidst the work of recreation. When we fail to take time to pray or meditate, or even just to relax and smell the roses, the problem may simply be that there is a wide gulf between our intentions and our actions.

Those people whom I most admire, the ones who have really got it together, even the ones who are very busy in volunteer work, or who work full time, also find time to recharge their batteries. They have a quiet time, a long walk, or a fulfilling craft or hobby. They have learned that they have to make the time because it won't make itself.

They have also learned that they work better if they take time to pray, to read, to do something creative, just for them.

What do we pray? Many of us come to prayer with a list. Help me with this and do that for someone else. Such prayers are fine, but I wonder if

we spend time listening? Quiet. Reflective. How many friends would stick around if we did all of the talking every time we got together.

The famous magician Harry Houdini, taught himself to hold his breath several times longer than the average person. When he did certain tricks he heightened the suspense by asking members of the audience to hold their breath with him. Invariably his audience was gasping for breath he was sitting in a tank of water as calm and cool as a cucumber. In the same manner the disciplines of prayer are not so much natural as they are built upon, learned and improved over time.

As Christians we are not trying out for sainthood. We are called to be disciples of Jesus. We must remember that we cannot do this fully unless we are prepared to look after ourselves and our spiritual lives.

We not required to save the world all by ourselves. We are called to remember that we cannot do anything well on our own strength. We need to take time, not only to smell the roses but to listen for the word and guidance of God. We might not think that we have time for that. But in essence the truth is that we don't have the time, NOT to do it.

Let us remember to do that as we seek to follow with all of our lives.

Prayer

When Jesus walked on dusty roads or sat by glistening waters, he met people where they were. When he bent down low to touch the leper, or raised his eyes to touch Zacchaeus' heart, heaven and earth were met.

And so our prayer today is that our world will know his healing touch and his forgiving heart. That those who have been hurt by insincere actions and damning words will hear his healing voice. That those whose lives are filled with dark thoughts, or unimaginable fears, will know his peace.

May he walk beside those who are close to giving up hope and where life seems to have no point; where people struggle to make ends meet and fear the bailiffs' knock on the door.

May children living in sewers or tending addiction-racked parents feel the touch of a caring hand and an end to injustice and fear.

And may all who weep and mourn, or feel abandoned and unloved turn towards his voice, move towards his arms and hear the whisper of his presence in the long hours of night.

May Christ inspire us and encourage us to bend down low;
to embrace those for whom society has no time or patience. Raise our
eyes upwards to see the struggling patient and the exhausted care giver.
And where young and old stumble and fall, may we be there to offer
support, that all will know the love that transcends all others.

Blessing

As we go our separate ways may we remember that each day offers more
things than we can do. May we do what needs to be done, postpone what
does not, and be at peace with what we can be and do.

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