

**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.

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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

We light this Candle to light our way as we journey to Jerusalem, the cross, and the tomb.

May it's light strengthen us where the road is hard, embolden us when our hearts lose courage, and bring hope as the road grows dark.

Jesus knew strength of purpose: a purpose from which he refused to waver even when confronted with all manner of temptation and in the face of death itself. He knew the things that were his to do. May we, in these days of confusion know the Spirit's purpose for our lives.

May we discern what is ours to do and walk in Christ's Way by getting on with the tasks that his teachings reveal. And, amidst all the competing voices that call us in so many directions, may we hear be reminded and unequivocally the voice that assures us that we are not God. That Christ's call to us today is to stand firm, to be still and listen, and to follow wherever the Spirit leads for love's sake.

### Reading 1 John 2

I am writing to you, my children, because your sins have already been forgiven through the name of Jesus. I am writing to you, mothers and fathers, who have come to know the One who has existed from the beginning. I am writing to you, young women and men, who have already conquered the Evil One. I have written to you, children, because you already know our Creator. I have written to you, mothers and fathers, who have come to know the One who has existed from the beginning. I have written to you, young women and men, because you are strong, and the Word of God remains in you, and you have overcome the Evil One. Do not love this passing world or anything that is in the world. The love of Abba God is not in anyone who loves this world, for anything that this world has to offer—the cravings of the flesh, the cravings of the eye, the boastful pride of life—could never come from Abba God, but only from this world. And this world, with its cravings, is passing away; but anyone who does the will of God will not pass away.

## Reflection

If we ever take, or had the time, to zoom out the lenses of our lives, of life, we would see that most of our troubles stem from attachment to things that we mistakenly see as permanent. What the writer of the letter of John calls 'Do not love this passing world ... the boastful pride of life'. Operating from that misconception, we see aggression and competitiveness as helpful in the pursuit of what we imagine and desire. But this only foments belligerence. Such misguided thinking has always been going on in the human mind, but our ability to act on it has become greater, now that we have machines and techniques of enormous power to gather and consume resources. In this way, greed and aggression, spurred on by our ignorance of things as they really are, release more of their poison into the world. If problems are resolved in a humane way, they simply end, whereas if one tries inhumane ways, further problems are added to the previous ones.

The humane antidote to these problems is what is at the core, the heart of the teachings of Jesus, namely, love and compassion, which are the essential ingredients of world peace. We are social animals; the main factors keeping us together are love and compassion. When we have love and compassion for a very poor person, our feelings are based on altruism. By contrast, love toward our partner, children, or a close friend is often mixed with attachment, and when our attachment changes, our kindness may disappear. Complete love is based not on attachment but on altruism, which is the most effective response to suffering.

Love and compassion are what we must strive to cultivate in ourselves, extending their present boundaries all the way to limitlessness. Undiscriminating, spontaneous, unlimited love and compassion are possible even toward someone who has done

harm to us — Jesus exhorts us to 'love our enemies'. And their power is astonishing.

One of the first actions we took in life was to suck milk from our mother's nipple, mother's milk being the very symbol of love and compassion. Scientists have documented through research on monkeys that offspring who are separated from their mothers for a prolonged period are more tense and harsh, lacking the capacity to express friendliness to others, whereas those brought up with their mothers are more playful, which implies happiness.

What was the old saying ....it takes a village to raise one child' - All beings share family ties. From the moment of our birth, we are under the care and kindness of our parents; later in life, when we face the suffering of disease and old age, we are again dependent on the kindness of others. If at the beginning and end of our lives we depend upon the kindness of others, why in the middle of our lives should we not act kindly toward them? It is the pragmatic choice.

Developing a kind heart, a feeling of closeness for all beings, does not require following a conventional religious practice. It is not only for those who believe in religion. It is for everyone, regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation. It is for all who consider themselves to be, above all, members of the human family, who can embrace this larger and longer perspective. The basic values of love and compassion are present in us from the time of our birth, whereas racial, ethnic, political, and theological perspectives come later. Violence does not accord with our basic human nature, which may lead us to wonder why all sorts of violence become news but compassionate acts seldom do. The reason is that violence is shocking and not in conformity with our basic human nature, whereas we take compassionate acts for granted because they are closer to our nature.

Since we all wish to gain happiness and avoid suffering, and since a single person is relatively unimportant in relation to countless others, we should be able to see that it is worthwhile to share our possessions with others. Happiness that is a byproduct of loving and serving others is far superior to what we gain from serving only ourselves.

Our lives are in constant flux, which generates many predicaments. But when these are faced with a calm and clear mind supported by spiritual practice, by zooming out the lens of our lives - they can all be successfully resolved. When our minds are clouded by hatred, selfishness, jealousy, and anger, we lose not only control but also our judgment. At those wild moments, anything can happen, including war. Although the practice of compassion and wisdom is useful to us all, it is especially valuable for those responsible for running national affairs, in whose hands lie the power and opportunity to create a framework for world peace. Perhaps more necessary now than for many years.

### Prayer

Even as we long for the warmth and stillness of spring we give thanks to you, Creator God, for the weather-beaten beauty of this place in which we live. The long winter has been harsh and demanding on all of us, but still we rejoice in these soft, green islands that are our home and which welcome all who come to our shores, to work or on holiday. We give thanks for the lengthening days coaxing our daffodils into flower, and for the spectacular tides of this week. We have only to open our eyes and to look to see the promise of new life all around us and we give you thanks, Creator God, for hope and for our burgeoning surroundings.

God of peace, we pray for all those for whom peace, safety and security is but a distant memory, or a state of being that they have never known. We pray for politicians and negotiators trying to make Gaza, Ukraine and so many African countries safe places again after unjust wars and uprisings. We pray for courage for all who have suffered bereavement, loss, rape and violence in conflict and we ask for the healing of their minds and bodies.

Mother God, we pray for a fairer world, one where all should have self-respect, kindness, shelter, warmth and enough food. We pray for the work of all aid agencies, for food banks and especially ours here in Orkney. Help us to live in the light of Love and to care for our neighbours everywhere. We might ask "What can I do, give or do without to make things better in the here and now?" God of Compassion, help us always to hold onto our vision of what Your world should and could be, and to live our lives as best we can to make this fragile environment one of sustainable beauty and possibility for all.

We know that to love freely and with compassion we have the mandate that Jesus gave us and so we say together:

### Blessing

Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow.  
With that confidence and in that hope, let us go in peace to  
love and to serve the Lord all the days of our lives.

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