

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [HELENA]

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am Sister Helena and Sister Alison Joy and I welcome you to this Eastertide Celebration from the home of the Companions of Our Lady and St Mungo, assisted by other members of St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow in their respective places of isolation. The word 'Eucharist' means thanksgiving, and we give thanks this morning for you all and for our wider community.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession - [HELENA and AJ]

[AJ] God is love and we are God's children.

There is no room for fear in love.
We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

[Silence]

[AJ] God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[HELENA] God, who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from our sins, heal and strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect - [HELENA]

O God, you never cease to call even those far away, for it is your will that all be drawn into one fold. Attune our ears to the voice of the Good Shepherd, who leads us always to you, that we may find under your tender protection life in all its fullness. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

The Ministry of the Word – second video

Gospel - [JIM McKILLOP]

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

Jesus said: 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the

sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [MATTHEW]

“Jesus used this figure of speech with them but they did not understand what he was saying to them”

Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever listened to the gospel reading and then asked yourself, “What is he talking about?” “What does this mean?”

Whenever I’m preparing for a Sunday, that’s my starting point; and this week is no different.

This week we hear of Sheep, sheepfold and shepherd; we hear of a gate and gatekeeper, of thieves and bandits, of voices, and abundant life.

It almost feels like there is too much is going on; there are way too many mixed metaphors going on here.

At the beginning of today's gospel from John it sounds like Jesus is suggesting that he is the shepherd who enters the gate and the sheep, he says, listen to and follow his voice..

In today's gospel Jesus says that he is the gate.

The Gospel writer clearly states that Jesus was using a "figure of speech." That's why this text, like so many of Jesus' sayings and teachings, is difficult to understand; it's confusing; it makes no sense.

The rational, logical, intellectual mind cannot understand a figure of speech.

The figure of speech used today really points beyond itself; it encourages us to think, to see, and to listen differently.

Abundant life, Jesus says, is why he came; Jesus came that we might "have life, and have it abundantly."

What does that mean for us? Where is our life abundant? And in what ways is it less than abundant?

Keep in mind, however, that abundance is not something we get. It's a way of living and being.

An abundant life is not about quantity, wealth, or success.

It's not about approval, popularity, security, or being number one, or any of the other things we often think it is.

How many times in life have we got what you wanted, been what others said we should be, or done what was encouraged and rewarded by society only to discover that something is missing in our life?

We had it all but we were not abundant.

Jesus today is telling us that abundant life is touching and living the divine life.

It's a quality not a quantity. It's about meaning, integrity, purpose, creativity, relationship, and wholeness.

The abundant life adds to the life of others and the world.

It's life that leads to life, love that leads to love; it's joy that leads to joy, hope that leads to hope, kindness that leads to kindness, generosity that leads to generosity, beauty that leads to beauty, and gratitude that leads to gratitude.

Isn't that what we really want? Isn't that what we want for ourselves and for each other?

Who is the shepherd? The obvious answer is Jesus. That's certainly not a wrong answer. Later in John's account of the gospel Jesus will say, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). But is that the only answer? Could there be other shepherds? And if so, who might they be?

Maybe the shepherd here is anyone or anything that nourishes, fosters, empowers, and guards life. It could be God, Jesus; it could be you, or me. Shepherding is not only an action but also a relationship.

What about those thieves and bandits? Jesus is not warning us about having our things stolen but about having our life stolen and our abundance depleted.

Thieves and bandits are sneaky and they often wear the disguise of acceptance: work, money, productivity, knowledge, meeting other's needs and expectations, saying yes and being available, striving for quality in what we do. There's nothing wrong with any of those things until they begin to steal our life. And sometimes they do.

We are the gatekeepers of our lives. We are the keeper and guardian of our heart. Guarding our heart means staying awake, being watchful, and remaining diligent.

Awareness of, and reflection on what is happening within and outside of us are the gatekeeper's key.

Sometimes we need to open the gate but sometimes we need to keep the gate of our life closed.

Who or what stands at our gates today? Who or what are the people, opportunities, possibilities, and choices that seek entry into our life?

The gates in our life are threshold places, they times of discernment, moments of transition, and decisions to be made.

The promise of today's Gospel is in Jesus' assures that we do not have to make these decisions alone or in isolation.

Jesus said, "I am the gate." He is the true gate that opens and leads to the pastures of abundant life; he is the Gate that leads to the Father if we listen to his voice.

We open or close our gates in collaboration with Jesus! "We are the sheep who follow the shepherd because we know his voice."

But to what voices are we listening?

There are a myriad of voices in our world vying for our attention?

Who or what do we sound like when we speak? Is it our parents, our spouse, our boss?

Perhaps it's our fear or anger, the things that wound us?

Is it the voice of those thieves and bandits? Or is it the voice of wisdom, life, love, compassion? Is it the voice of beauty, truth,

generosity, hope and of joy? Is it the voice of Jesus? The voice of the true shepherd?

Which voices are loudest in our life today? What voices have we invested in? Are they worthy of our trust and our life or are they bankrupt? Are they bankrupting us?

To which voices do we need to close the gate of our heart and to which ones do we need to open ourselves up to?

There are no easy, simple, one size fits all, or once and for all answers to any of these questions. There just aren't.

Instead, there are sheep and shepherds, gates and gatekeepers, thieves and bandits, voices, and abundant life.

If we choose the right Gate, that abundance of life is promised in the person of our risen Lord.

Intercessions [FRANNY MAWDITT]

Let us pray.

God most holy, we pray for The Anglican Communion in Japan and here in Scotland for our Primus and Interim Bishop Mark Strange and Bishop Kevin Pearson, our Bishop-Elect; give grace to them and our Lay and Alternate Lay Representatives and the members of Regional Councils as they seek to witness to our faith. We ask your blessing on the churches of Holy Trinity, Ayr (Martyn Trembath) and St Oswald's, Maybole (Jim Geen). Help these communities and us here at St Mary's to make wise decisions at this time of pandemic. Within St Mary's we remember the people who are involved in the Book group, the Movies at St Mary's group and the Needle arts group.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

God most holy, we thank you for our beautiful world and the delight of spring here in Scotland. We are also aware of the damage we have done to our environment and the hardship suffered by so many, living with the effects of climate change. We pray for those working to find solutions and we ask for bold thinking and action; and give us and our leaders wisdom and vision to heal our world.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God most holy, we bring you our world which is in crisis on many fronts; we pray for all those who are putting their lives at risk to help others; we remember those who are receiving treatment and those who are giving it. We pray for those who are anxious, angry, troubled and sad. Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, help us when we struggle to hear your voice and follow your leading; your promise is that you give us safety and help us find pasture.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

And finally, we pray for those who are grieving because they have lost loved ones over the past weeks. We ask that they will know your comfort and strength. And on their Year's Mind we remember Isabella Wilson Eddie, Constance Ethel Ellis and James Lindsay.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory. **Amen.**

Communion – third video

We share Christ's love in many ways, offering time, talents, and money to aid the work of the Church. We can't pass an offering basket to each other now, but if you wish to make an offering by bank transfer, please look on the Cathedral website for details. If you are joining us from another parish, I am sure they also have a way for you to support them in their service to God's children.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation; through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made: it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation; through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands; it will become the cup of our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

Though we cannot share the bread and wine together physically as we would like to do, know that not only they will become the Body and Blood of Christ which we two will receive, but this sacrifice is offered for all who are watching this service, for you are indeed the body of Christ and individually members of it. May this offering feed you that you may in turn feed others with Christ, our Risen Saviour and our Lord.

Eucharistic Prayer - [HELENA]

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you, Author of all being.

Your power sustains, your love restores, our broken world.

You are unceasingly at work,
from chaos bringing order
and filling emptiness with life.

Christ, raised from the dead,
proclaims the dawn of hope.
He lives in us that we may walk in light.

Your Spirit is fire in us,
your breath is power
to purge our sin
and warm our hearts to love.

As children of your redeeming purpose,
freed by him who burst from the tomb
and opened the gate of life,
we offer you our praise,
with angels and archangels
and the whole company of heaven,
singing the hymn of your unending glory

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Praise and thanksgiving be to you,
Lord of all,
for by the Cross eternal life is ours
and death is swallowed up in victory.
In the first light of Easter glory broke from the tomb
and changed the women's sorrow into joy.
From the Garden the mystery dawned
that he whom they had loved and lost
is with us now in every place for ever.

Making himself known in the breaking of the bread,
speaking peace to the fearful disciples,
welcoming weary fishermen on the shore,

he renewed the promise of his presence
and of new birth in the Spirit
who sets the seal of freedom on your sons and daughters.

Before he was given up to suffering and death,
recalling the night of Israel's release,
the night in which slaves walked free,
at supper with his disciples
he took bread and offered you thanks.

He broke the bread,
and gave it to them, saying:

"Take, eat.

This is my Body: it is broken for you."

After supper, he took the cup,
he offered you thanks,
and gave it to them saying:

"Drink this, all of you.

This is my Blood of the new covenant;
it is poured out for you, and for all,
that sins may be forgiven.

Do this in remembrance of me."

We now obey your Son's command.
We recall his blessed passion and death,
his glorious resurrection and ascension;
and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.
Made one with him, we offer you these gifts
and with them ourselves,
a single, holy, living sacrifice.

Hear us, most merciful Father,
and send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon this bread and this wine,
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,
they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,

and we may be kindled with the fire of your love
and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body
to live and work to your praise and glory;
may we grow together in unity and love
until at last, in your new creation,
we enter into our heritage
in the company of the Virgin Mary,
the apostles, and prophets,
and of all our brothers and sisters living and departed.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be to you,
Lord of all ages,
world without end.

Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.
Lord, unite us in this sign.

Lord's Prayer [AJ]

As our Saviour has taught us,
so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Communion

Music - The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never.
I nothing lack if I am his,
and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth;
and where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

Blessing & Dismissal

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is gracious.
And his mercy endures for ever.

**Father of all, we give you thanks and praise that when we
were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and
opened the gate of glory. May we who are Christ's body live
his risen life and bring life to others; we whom the Spirit
lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you**

have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you this day and forever more. **Amen.**

We would like to thank all who made this celebration possible, and all of you who have been with us.

May you all stay safe and be well.

Abide in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Voluntary

March from Richard III by William Walton

Young church materials are available on the online worship page - www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship.