

The Gathering

1 - Welcome - [KELVIN]

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

Hello and welcome. My name is Kelvin Holdsworth and I'm the Provost here.

The gospel reading this week sounds a bit like a game of hide and seek. Crowds of people wanted to meet Jesus and went chasing after him in boats.

People find their way to this place hungry to meet Jesus too. Most people don't come by boat. But together we do have a desire to meet the same person whom people chased after all those years ago.

And he's right here.

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow.

3 - Collect for Purity - [SISTER AJ]

**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.**

5 - Confession

[OLIVER] 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]

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.

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

7 - Gloria - [MAGNUS]

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.

8 - Collect - [KELVIN]

O God, the giver of every gift that endures,
with your grace we understand the wonder of life and why it is
given.

By the word of your Son challenge our foolishness,
confront our greed,
and shape our lives to the wisdom of the gospel.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and
ever. Amen

The Ministry of the Word

11 - GOSPEL: John 6:24-35 - [MARCO]

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

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were
there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum
looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to
him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them,
'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw
signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for
the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the
Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do
to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the
work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they
said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we
may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our
ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He
gave them bread from heaven to eat."' Then Jesus said to them,
'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread
from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from

heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious gospel
Praise to Christ our Lord.

12 - Sermon [SISTER HELENA]

The phrase 'manna from heaven' probably rings a bell even for those who don't know the context. The image is of unexpected bounty, and even many who remember the mysterious bread and the nightly covey of quail tend, I suspect, to forget the sequels: first, you can't store the food overnight. Hoarded even till the next day it becomes a rotted, inedible mess. Second, the very folk to whom it is provided soon get fed up with it and complain about being led out to the wilderness to starve, adding paradoxically that they 'loathe this miserable food.'

Perhaps it wasn't boredom with the new diet. Just maybe some of them wanted to keep something extra for themselves that they could eat whenever they wanted to, not with the rest.

Fast forward to Jesus and the crowd who followed him to Capernaum—crowds he knows are focused on the bread they had eaten, rather than the meaning of its multiplication or Jesus' teaching. He tries to point them beyond the loaves, but they want more signs, pointing to Moses providing 'bread from heaven' to the hungry Hebrews in the wilderness. Jesus reminds them it was not Moses but God who gave and gives the true bread from heaven which gives life to the world.

Still thinking literally, they ask that he give them this bread always—only to hear him say, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry....' That doesn't end very well

either, as the crowd argue about who he thinks he is to say such things and how could his flesh be bread.

This is neither the first nor the last time in or out of Scripture that people miss God's point. Indeed, in the Gospels the thick headedness even of Jesus' closest friends is a recurring trope, that allows a lesson to be underlined or a parable explained. We, of course, know better.

But do we? Are we not in our own way just as dense as the disciples are portrayed?

I am not sure which is worse ecclesiastical failure—reducing mystery to some oversimplified common denominator, or going a bit mad with theological complications, especially around the Sacrament of the Eucharist, for which these two readings provide fertile ground.

For example, the manna God gives in divine bounty to the starving Hebrew refugees in the wilderness is initially greeted with suspicion because it looks different and obviously wasn't baked, but once proven to be edible it is indeed life-sustaining. And the quails—they practically walk into the pot! They remind me of an American cartoonist's little creature who will do all your chores, run all your errands, and, on request, turn itself into a fine dinner that tastes just like roast chicken!

But the people forget how hungry and how near death they were. Manna and quail become ordinary fare, and they get tired of everybody getting just enough for their individual needs, and of having to eat it communally, never mind it having no shelf-life! And when they start whinging about the leeks and garlics of Egypt, forgetting the loving generosity of the very God who freed them from bondage, led them by signs and wonders, and made with them an everlasting Covenant....

The ritual remembrance of the Passover is especially poignant for some but not all: was God in the gas chambers? if He delivered

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego unscathed through the flames, why not my father or my grandmother?

Equally we could ask what we Christians have done with the Living Bread given to us? Has Mystery become monotony? Do signs have only one level of meaning? Is it just a symbol or a reality we cannot begin to understand, which the wisely simple accept as it was given with sometimes flagging but equally reawakening wonder?

Where is God in the endless theological analysis: transubstantially, consubstantially, symbolically? Where is God in our rituals, however richly, plainly, or cosily presented? Have we lost sight of Jesus the Living Bread? He came among us as Emmanuel—God with us. He was with us once in dusty, sweaty, huggable humanity, sharing our joy and our tears, pain and even a good meal and a pint. He was at the same time one who embodied the very essence of the living God and touched the God-spark in those he met, whether they loved him, flinched from what he showed them about themselves, or wanted to be rid of the threat he posed—the threat of a real presence that could unmake their world.

Can we see him still with us in the writings of his followers? Their perspectives and agendas differ and so do ours, but can we still feel and touch his living being? Why does the very Living Bread meant to be shared in communion with each other so often divide and exclude?

He left us this sacrament, the bread he broke, the body he offered, God's own self poured out to revive us and renew the gift of divine life within us not merely individually but collectively.

When we turn the key to close the Tabernacle do we do it out of reverence for the Mystery that lives in the sacrament, to have it accessible for ministry to the sick and for private prayer? Or do we somehow think we have put the living God safely in the box? Is there somewhere under the familiar routines of worship a lurking suspicion that the God-with-us in the living bread we offer and share is there to unmake our old selves and remake us anew—for

a life that is truly open, accessible, and welcoming? A life we can't keep to ourselves, lest it decompose like day-old manna.

What has drawn us here today? What did we really miss in lockdown? What has been made and unmade in us? And how are we challenged to unmake and make our world anew?

14 - Intercessions [PAT]

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom, saying
O Lord, your kingdom come.

O Lord, your kingdom come.

Eternal God, we pray for all the peoples of the world;
that they may know you as the God of peace,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For the communities in which we live;
For those dependent on alcohol, drug users and the local
support agencies which care for them;
for all those who live and work in the immediate vicinity of the
Cathedral, that you watch over their going out and their coming in,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For nations, for leaders and governments;
that integrity may mark all their dealings,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For all who labour for righteousness;
that your presence and help may give them courage,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For communities torn by dissension and strife;

that your forgiveness may bring them healing,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For the anxious, the lonely, the bereaved;
that consolation and peace may be theirs,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For the Church, your household and family;
the Church of the Province of South East Asia
for all currently training for ordained and lay ministries
for our bell ringers here at St Mary's,
that your people may be firm in the confession of their hope,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For Kevin our Bishop, and for all who bear Christ's name;
that their lives may proclaim your glory,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For those who are separated from us by death;
and whom we name before you now
that theirs may be the kingdom which is unshakeable,
we pray to you,

O Lord, your kingdom come.

For ourselves
that we may know
and believe in you,
the Bread of Life,
we pray to you

O Lord, your kingdom come.

Amen.

Communion

17 - Offertory - [KELVIN]

Bread has been shared at altars in this building for almost 150 years. And with the bread, people have been nourished and inspired and challenged and comforted.

If you would like to help us to keep offering bread at the table and all that goes with that bread, then please join those of us who make a regular gift to help it all happen.

You can find details of how to do so online at thecathedral.org.uk

And thank you for making an offering.

Let us present our offerings to the Lord.

**Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory,
the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in
heaven and on earth is yours.**

All things come from you, and of your own we give you.

18 - Eucharistic Prayer

[KELVIN] The Lord be with you.

[OLIVER] **And also with you.**

[KELVIN] Lift up your hearts.

[OLIVER] **We lift them to the Lord.**

[KELVIN] Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[OLIVER] **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Worship and praise belong to you, Father,
in every place and at all times.

All power is yours.

You created the heavens and established the earth;
you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours
are brought together in a wonderful exchange.
He made his home among us
that we might for ever dwell in you.

Through your Holy Spirit
you call us to new birth
in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose
we offer you our praise,
with angels and archangels
and the whole company of heaven,
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS - [MAGNUS]

**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.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you,
most loving Father,
for the gift of your Son born in human flesh
He is the Word existing beyond time,
both source and final purpose,
bringing to wholeness all that is made.
Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross.
By your power you raised him from the dead.
He broke the bonds of evil
and set your people free
to be his Body in the world.

On the night when he was given up to death,
knowing that his hour had come,
having loved his own,

he loved them to the end.
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 God's children 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.

19 - Breaking of the Bread - [KELVIN]

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

20 - Lord's Prayer - [OLIVER]

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.**

21 - Communion - [KELVIN]

God is with us wherever we are.

As we gaze in adoration we feed on God in our hearts and minds that we may in turn feed the world.

O God, even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

Amen.

24 - Post Communion Prayer - [SISTER AJ]

God of grace, we have shared in the mystery of the body and blood of Christ. May we who have tasted the bread of life live with you for ever. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

25 - Blessing - [KELVIN]

It has been good to worship today together.

If you are finding a way into this congregation either online or in person, do fill in the welcome card on the website – thecathedral.org.uk – just go to the front page and click on the word welcome.

The crowd we heard about today said to Jesus – give us this bread always. I pray that you have nourishment from God all your days and especially this week.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Amen.

Voluntary - [FRIKKI]

'Village Festival' by Martin How