

# The Gathering

## 1 - Welcome - [MAGGIE]

Hello and welcome to St Mary's. Though we are in many different places we are united in God's Spirit. As we gather, our thoughts and our hearts are full of many things. Let us quiet our thoughts and open our hearts, so that we can hear what Jesus is asking of us today.

## 3 - Collect for Purity - [BECKI]

**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.**

[MAGGIE] 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 - [MORVEN]**

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 - [MAGGIE]**

God of wisdom, whose word probes the motives of our hearts, with you all things are possible. Let worldly treasure not keep us from Jesus, who looks on us with love. Free us to leave all things and follow him, 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: Mark 10:17-31 – [BILLY]

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

**Glory to Christ our Saviour.**

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother."' He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'

Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

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

## **12 - Sermon [HELENA]**

If today's Gospel makes us squirm a bit with discomfort, that's exactly what it is supposed to do. The rich young man comes to Jesus looking like the kind of man in posh adverts—he seems to have everything. On top of all that, he is a good man, diligently observing the commandments. What could possibly be missing?

Something pushes him to ask Jesus what more he must do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus looks at his pleading face and loves him. But there is one thing more thing he lacks, and that turns out to be a deal-breaker. Asked to give away everything to the poor and follow Jesus, he is shocked and grieved. He simply can't do it, and retreats.

It is a story that has caused massive discomfort ever since. St. Antony of Egypt took it quite literally, settling his temporal affairs and heading out into the desert. Centuries later St Francis of Assisi not only gave away all he had, but raided his father's warehouse, finally stripping naked before the bishop to prove his desire to follow Jesus. Countless others have followed them leaving all they have on the altar. It is a hard thing to do, but a wise old nun once said to me, 'To vow poverty and stand there with empty, open hands is not that hard, even comfortingly dramatic. The hard part is to keep from curling your fingers around to take it all back in penny packets.'

No wonder even Religious Communities squirm. Oh yes, they may take a vow of poverty, but mostly it means individual non-possession, not corporate destitution. Even then, everything from books and papers, craft supplies, to extra socks can be found in most cells or lockers.

Preachers try to wriggle out of this demand of Jesus. Give to the poor, help those who have less than you, be hospitable, but it can't possibly mean let go of everything.

Hold what you need and those you love with a loose grip. Don't get possessed by your possessions, they say. Be generous but look out for yourself and your loved ones! I knew a monastic who wrote her dissertation on the sheer impossibility of the vow of literal poverty.

How to reconcile this paradox without casuistically denying Jesus' call? After all, to amass great wealth while so many people are dying without food or shelter or even a change of clothes is obscene, though plenty of Christians do, even if they give some of it away. Just look at the tonnes of food and household goods even modest households waste daily. Look at the panic buying of everything from loo rolls to petrol. Fast fashion is just as bad as spending thousands of pounds on a designer outfit worn for a single occasion. Such waste robs the poor of goods, yes, but it also steals the very planet we live on from all of us.

But what if it isn't all about the money? What if that has less obvious implications? What if lurking there too subtly behind the gilded mask is another reading?

Wealth is shorthand for power, yes, but even more it is a pervasively toxic shorthand for coercion and control and a weird surrogate for security. So is wealth the rich young man's stumbling block, or is it fear? Fear of radical change. Fear of losing the control he has over his own circumstances, fear of the radical insecurity inherent in letting go of his goods and his comfort to pursue the unknown that Jesus offers—a promise that is both magnetic and repellent.

For all his obedience to religious law, our rich young man ultimately turns away because he lacks faith, lacks in fact trust which is the original meaning of faith.

He lacks faith not in some future vision of 'pie in the sky when you die,' but trust that Jesus' call to a radical change in his outlook and way of life can be something better beyond his wildest dreams.

He is, in fact, very much like us as we hear the anguished cries not only of the poor but also of the burning, raped, poisoned, and drowning Earth. Vested interests in industry and commerce have convinced us that we cannot live in any other way except as collaborators in their fatal cycle, and they are not going to repair the damage to our world and ultimately to our souls.

Only we can do anything to effect change within and outwith ourselves. Only you and I can accept Christ's invitation to leave our lack of trust behind and gamble all on his bright promise. That small example of faith we show can grow and multiply for the healing of the peoples and of our planet.

But it is too late to wait for others to act. It is past time to heed the Rabbinic question so like those of the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth: 'If not here, where? If not now, when? And if not me, who?'

#### **14 - Intercessions [DEBBIE]**

I ask your prayers for peace in the life of the world.

For Afghanistan and for all places where there is conflict, persecution and need.

Pray for God's peace.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for all who suffer injury, sickness and loss.

Pray for all who are afflicted.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for all who wield authority and influence. For those working to address the urgent needs of our planet and all the life it sustains.

Pray for all who exercise power.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for all whom we have wronged knowingly, or thoughtlessly.

Pray for all who hate us.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for our bishop Kevin, for the Church of the Province of West Africa and here in the Diocese, for St. John's, Dumfries. Pray for all whom Christ has appointed to his service. At our own Cathedral of St. Mary's, for those who tend the building, especially for the flower arrangers.

Pray for God's people.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for all in our community who are vulnerable, whether because of ill-health, poverty or precarious circumstances. For social care workers, and all they do.

Pray for all in need in our city.

*Silence*

And: Give thanks to God for all in whom Christ has been honoured, especially those who have recently died.

*Silence*

**Amen.**

## Communion

### **17 - Offertory - [MAGGIE]**

All that we have we hold in open hands. If you are a regular at St Mary's you may wish to make a financial contribution to the life of the cathedral. If you go to [www.thecathedral.org.uk](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk) and click on 'Donate to St Mary's' you can make your offering there.

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**

[MAGGIE] The Lord be with you.

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

[MAGGIE] Lift up your hearts.

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

[MAGGIE] 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  
who honour Mary, chosen mother of your Son,  
and with all generations call her blessed,  
we offer you our praise,  
with angels and archangels  
and the whole company of heaven,  
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

**SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS - [MORVEN]**



**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 - [MAGGIE]**

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 - [MAGGIE]**

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 - [REBEKAH]**

Faithful God, in baptism and eucharist we are made one with you.  
May we who have shared in holy things always bear witness to  
your covenant, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

**Amen.**

## **25 - Blessing - [MAGGIE]**

Thank you to all who have helped make this service happen. As we go into the week ahead, may we notice where God is at work, transforming our world, and let us be willing to give all that we have, and all that we are, to join in with God.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of God's 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.**

## **Voluntary - [STEVEN]**

Prelude in C (BWV 531) - JS Bach