

# The Gathering

## 1 - Welcome - [OLIVER]

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

Online, some people are called 'influencers', meaning, because of their following, they have sway over others' decisions. Today's gospel features a story about the power of influence.

Right now, there are many people trying to get us to pay attention and persuade us to do something. The world can be a noisy place. But for now, let us still those voices, and draw close to this table and listen out for the Word of God.

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow.

## 3 - Collect for Purity - [ISOBEL]

**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

[KELVIN] 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.**

[OLIVER] 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 (Archer) - [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 - [OLIVER]**

God of justice, God of salvation, from every land you call a people to yourself. Yours is the work we do, yours the message we carry.

Keep your Church single-minded and faithful to you. Let failure not discourage us nor success beguile our hearts, as you send us to proclaim the gospel. We make our prayer 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: Mark 6:14-29 – [Iain]

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

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptizer.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did

not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

## **12 - Sermon [KELVIN]**

A few years ago I had a conversation with someone who is in the drinks trade. It is his job to get people to buy one brand of whisky rather than another. He cares about what gin you see when you walk into an off licence. He knows what kinds of drinks different kinds of people like and he is on the lookout for what be the next big thing in a glass.

And as we talked he spoke about how social media had changed everything about the world and he asked me how many followers I had on twitter. I told him and he said, "Huh – that might be enough..."

"What for?" I asked.

"Oh," he said, "sometimes when we find someone with a lot of followers, we send them something nice to drink. If we send them half a dozen bottles, maybe they will post on twitter how much they liked them and then their followers will think, "I want what he's enjoying".

"It is a new way of marketing, I'll see if you have enough followers, maybe they will send you something nice".

Well, it is a couple of years down the line now and I have to conclude that I didn't have enough followers. When it comes to booze, I clearly don't have much influence.

My glass is neither half full nor half empty. They never filled my glass at all.

It was the first time I'd really heard about a company using the idea of influencers online.

Fast forward to a couple of months ago and I found that someone had added me to a list on twitter and a few extra people followed me.

It was a list of people who were all religious people in one way or another. On the list were people I like and agree with and admire and that was flattering. And on the list were some that I don't like, don't agree with and don't admire at all.

The list was simply called Theological Influencers.

Someone was trying to compile a list of those who, on social media are people who are shaping the theological ideas of the day.

For better or for worse, I was one of them.

The gospel that we have today is a terrible story that few people like to preach about. John the Baptist loses his head to a tyrant enticed into a dark plot by a teasing temptress who is herself being manipulated by her scheming mother.

I want to bring the idea of being an influencer to bear on that story and use it as a lens through which to view what's going on.

Now, John the baptizer would certainly have been on any list of theological influencers of his day. He was sassy, rude, righteous and had a sharp tongue. He would had done well on twitter, I think.

He talked about people being a brood of vipers. Or chaff that the saviour would burn with unquenchable fire.

And he'd got into a public spat with Herod about Herod's relationship with Herodias – and well, picking that kind of public fight never ends well. And that is what as brought John – a good man who influenced the crowds to turn their lives around and turn back to God to this prison cell.

Herod is an archetypal tyrant who doesn't use words to exercise his influence. He uses power and force. He has influence. Terrifying influence. But with all his power, he is still scared of John and fascinated by him. He didn't want his sharp tongue to be berating him out in the

crowd. Much better to try to neutralise the prophet by making him a palace plaything. An entertainment for the court.

Which brings us to Herodias. Whose influence is that of the schemer. She just seems determined to use whatever influence she has to get what she wants.

And through taunting Herod with the seductive dance of her daughter, she gets what she came for – the head of the Baptist on a platter.

It is a gruesome story, devoid of any joy. It is no preacher's favourite tale in the lectionary.

But maybe as a story it asks us what we will do with what influence we have.

Herodias seems to me to be one of the bible's least appealing characters. The liberal inside me wants to know her story and know how she became so cruel and manipulative.

But we are left with a character who seems to have few redeeming features.

I was a little nonplussed by being described as a theological influencer. That's not necessarily how I see myself but I guess it might be true.

The question of what influence we will exercise on the world around us is one that we each have, whoever we are.

What do we do with the power to tweet, or phone, or write?

What do we do at work, at home, in our clubs and societies?

How do we relate to the people we sing with or play sports with or walk with or whatever?

Who wants to be remembered as Herodias or Herod are remembered after all?

God doesn't seem to get much of a look in in today's gospel story.

How might it have turned out differently if God's love had melted the heart of Herodias.

Or given Herod the courage to turn away from evil.

Or given the daughter things worth dancing for instead of her mother's intrigue.

Joy rather than death.

Will God's love get a look in the life you have this week?

How will you know?

How will others tell?

God's love and justice and peace and joy are not scarce or meagre or in short supply after all.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

#### **14 - Intercessions [Robert Mawditt]**

Let us pray for the life of the world; that God's peace may be known and may prevail.

For those who serve our communities in political life, for elected MPs and MSPs.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

For all who suffer injury, death or loss; that they may know the hope to which God calls us: for those whose names lie in our hearts today.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

For all who exercise rule and authority; that they may act with wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity: especially this week for those with political influence in Haiti and Afghanistan.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

For the Church which is Christ's body; that it may live for the praise of God: for the Episcopal Church in the Philippines; for Bishop Kevin and the churches of St John the Evangelist Baillieston, St Kentigern's Dennistoun and St Serf's Shettleston; within St Mary's for the benefactors of the congregation and those who pledge.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who have died, for those who have been an inspiration to us, for Norman Levy.

May they rest in peace, And rise in glory.

Holy God we bring you our prayers in the hope of the redemption of the world, in the Blessing of Christ. Amen

## Communion

### 17 - Offertory - [OLIVER]

Speaking out for what is right and what is good is not always easy; it comes at a price. Some people, however, invest in truth and put everything on the line, no matter the cost. They put their money where their mouth is.

If this place and what it stands for is important to you, maybe you'll want to do the same, if you don't already. To make a financial contribution to this church visit [www.thecathedral.org.uk](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk) and click DONATE TO ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL. There, you'll find several ways to take action to support this house of prayer for all people.

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



[OLIVER] The Lord be with you.

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

[OLIVER] Lift up your hearts.

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

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

[KELVIN] **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 (TBD) - [TBD]**

**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 - [OLIVER]**

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

### **20 - Lord's Prayer - [KELVIN]**

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 - [OLIVER]**

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 - [Isobel]**

Living God, in this sacrament we have shared in your eternal  
kingdom. May we who taste this mystery forever serve you in faith,  
hope and love. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **25 - Blessing - [OLIVER]**

Thank you to all who have contributed to this week's worship, for  
their inspiration and encouragement.

Sometimes, it can be tough to know the right thing to do. One of the prayers people most often pray is for guidance and wisdom. We're all searching for it.

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.**

### **Voluntary - [STEVEN]**

Bach - Prelude and Fugue in e minor (BWV 533) JS Bach

*There is an online coffee hour on Sunday at 1 pm. Details in the weekly congregational email. Sign up for emails at [www.thecathedral.org.uk](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk)*

*Images used:*

*Unknown*

*Christ before Saint John the Baptist, about 1400–1410, Tempera colors, gold, silver paint, and ink*

*Leaf: 33.5 × 23.5 cm (13 3/16 × 9 1/4 in.), Ms. 33 (88.MP.70), fol. 262*

*The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 33, fol. 262*

*Unknown*

*The Baptism of Christ; Tempera colors, gold, silver paint, and ink*

*Leaf: 33.5 × 23.5 cm (13 3/16 × 9 1/4 in.), Ms. 33 (88.MP.70), fol. 264v*

*The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 33, fol. 264v*