

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [OLIVER]

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

Throwing a party is difficult. A king who made grand plans for a party in today's Gospel parable was frustrated when things didn't turn out as he hoped. At this time, we may find ourselves like the king with scuppered plans. Maybe we thought we'd be somewhere else today or believed this day would be somehow different.

Here's an invitation. God calls people to this feast, whether they had planned to be here or not. This is a place for everyone. Whatever you're doing and wherever you've come from, this celebration is for you.

Collect for Purity - [JOHN]

Let us pray.

**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

[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.**

Gloria - [SHAE]

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 - [OLIVER]

God of goodness and kindness, you invite all peoples to the banquet and offer them a feast beyond compare. Give us your saving grace to keep unstained the robe of our baptism until that day when you welcome us to heaven's joyful table. 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 – second video

Reading: Exodus 32:1-14 - [ROBIN]

A reading from the Book of Exodus

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' Aaron said to them, 'Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.' They rose early the next day, and offered burnt-offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

The Lord said to Moses, 'Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"' The Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are.'

Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.'

But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, 'O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, "It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, "I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.'" And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:1-14 – [KELVIN]

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

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited

were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [KELVIN]

The temptation for me as a preacher today is to preach the most eloquent, learned, witty, and enlightening sermon about the golden calf. The story is a pretty good one after all. There's a lot going on, gold and dancing and Moses getting ratty when the Israelites start worshipping the idol that they have made rather than the one true God who is giving them commandments.

I say that is the great temptation because the real reason that most people preaching today would go down that route is to distract attention from the gospel reading or at least to avoid having to face the questions that it poses.

It feels easier to ignore Jesus's story than to deal with it.

But I find that I often learn more by worrying away at the most difficult parables. The parables that are easier to understand are in fact more difficult to preach on.

After all, who ever gave a sermon on the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son which was better than the original story?

It is in tackling the more difficult parables that we learn more.

And this week we've got Jesus at his most difficult.

Wait – did I say difficult?

He's not being difficult he's being out----ragrous.

The essence of the story is easy enough – the God figure, the king, can't find enough people to come into the wedding banquet so he sends out for more people.

What lovely inclusion.

It suits us in a church that talks about being open, inclusive and welcoming to love this kind of thing.

Fling wide the gates. Open the doors. Bring in more. There's always room for those who feel most rejected, most left out, most unrepresented, most forgotten, most looked over, most abandoned, most forsaken, most shunned, most lost.

There's room for you and there's room for me and there's room for everyone else.

And glory be, that seems to be our gospel here.

And if we were reading the version of this story that is found in Luke's gospel today, that would be the end of it.

But Matthew won't leave it at that and gives us this most difficult, most seemingly dreadful, most outrageous little detail.

For into the banquet comes a man who isn't dressed for the occasion.

And with our "More inclusive than thou" hats firmly on our heads we might think that this man was right up God's alley.

Isn't this the man whom God would welcome most of all.

But the way Matthew tells the story, the man gets a flea in his ear and an eternity out in the darkness for his presumption.

God may be interested in those gathered from the highways and the bye-ways but he's not interested in someone who couldn't be bothered putting on the right kilt for the occasion.

And yes, that's trouble for us inclusion minded Christians.

Oh yes, look, there's a golden calf to focus on rather than focusing on what seems to be coming from God that we don't like.

Golden calves are always a temptation – even ones which are in the pages of scripture.

But no – let's stick with Jesus for a bit and yes, even stick with Matthew's version of this story.

It may help to remember that of all the gospel writers, Matthew does have a bit of a fixation about who is in and who is out. It is the most binary of the gospels – the sheep and the goats, the saved and the damned – there's a lot of about who is in and who is outside of the kingdom.

And people tend to remember that the Matthean church seems to have been made up largely of Jewish converts to Christianity who were a bit puzzled that the majority Jewish population didn't follow them into recognising Jesus as the Messiah. And they were persecuted for their beliefs.

And yes whether you were in or out was a big deal to them. It isn't that surprising that Matthew has the focus that he does have.

And the truth is, very, very many interpretations of the Christian faith begin with a very inclusive message – "This faith is for everyone...."

But then they go on to put conditions around the invitation.

This faith is for everyone – but only those with the correct interpretation of Scripture.

This faith is for everyone – but only those who accept Jesus as their personal saviour and Lord and friend.

This faith is for everyone – but only good catholics get there in the end. Or true protestants. Or seventh day Methodist redeemed fundamentalist brothers of the apocalypse. Or whoever

Or this is for everyone – but only those who behave properly.

Or this faith is for everyone – but not the gays. (Of course, never the gays).

Religion very quickly turns into this:

Faith is for everyone – but not for you.

That big but.

Christians can't seem to resist putting in a but.

Do you want to hear God's but?

Well read this parable.

This faith is for everyone. We know that – everyone was invited – the good and the bad from the highways and the byways.

But,,,

What was God's but.

The condition God seems to set is that you are prepared to party.

And that's different from many a religious voice.

You are welcome, utterly welcome but there is a condition.

There are things that are not optional in the Christian life. Love, peace, joy.

And those strands are woven together in a special tartan. All made up into a wedding outfit.

Put it on.

It already fits you.

And join the party.

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Intercessions [PAT]

In this time of constrictions and constraints we offer prayer for all whose world has shrunk or become oppressive: for the many students currently having to isolate in halls of residence; for those who must continue or return to shielding; for those who cannot be with their families or friends ...

May they find the patience, resilience, and support to keep them steady through this time. God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In this time of hard choices we offer prayer for all who have to make decisions which will affect the lives of others: for those in government who must balance the health and safety of people with the health and survival of businesses and economies; for those responsible for allocating limited resources; for those who must make the call on closing business or services ...

May they find the wisdom, discernment, and courage to keep them steady through this time. God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In this time of uncertainty and unease we offer prayer for all involved in communities of succour and support: for those who work alongside refugees, the homeless, and people at risk of domestic violence; for all providing help through local networks to those affected by Covid restrictions; for the churches of the province of Uganda, St John's Baillieston, St Kentigern's Dennistoun, and St Serf's Shettleston; and for Bishop Kevin as he moves here to his new Diocese ...

May they find the energy, vision and resources to keep them steady through this time. God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In this time of difficulty and dislocation we offer prayer for all whose world has become darkened: for those who have lost their livelihoods or homes; for those who face the prospect of

redundancy or the loss of their businesses; for those coping with illness or bereavement, remembering especially the family of Joyce Dippie ...

May they find the comfort, courage and hope to keep them steady through this time. God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In this time of challenge and change, we pray for ourselves and those who are dear to us and for the journeys we must face in the days ahead;

and, at their year's mind for William Stark and Sheila Shaw on their journey deeper into you. May they rest in peace **and rise in glory.**

And we thank you that all times and all journeys are held in your hands.

Amen.

Communion – third video

Offertory - [OLIVER]

In an era when most of our invites and solicitations come to us online, it's easy to miss or ignore requests for help—even when they're important. This means that the attendance and support of a lot of things right now is reduced.

Fortunately, many of you have responded to the requests from this Cathedral for financial support since lockdown, and it's made a world of difference. If you're hearing this invitation now and want to respond affirmatively with your support, visit www.thecathedral.org.uk and click DONATE TO ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL. Thank you for your commitment.

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.

Eucharistic Prayer - [OLIVER]

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 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:

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 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 - [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.**

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.

Music at Communion - [MORVEN]

'Be Thou My Vision' - Bob Chilcott

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart, be all else but naught to me, save that thou art; be thou my best thought in the day and the night, both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word, be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord; thou my great Father, and I thy true son; be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou and thou only the first in my heart; O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art; Great heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Post Communion Prayer - [JOHN]

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.**

Blessing - [OLIVER]

Putting on a good party requires a lot of work and coordination. My thanks go to all who have sent the invitations to today's banquet and flung wide the doors ... and to everyone for showing up.

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.

A hymn and materials for Young Church are available on the online worship page at www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship.