

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [OLIVER]

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

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‘Enter into joy’—an invitation we hear in today’s Gospel parable and a bidding I offer to all who gather in this place. Come celebrate, give thanks and share in the love God has for the world. Welcome to St Mary’s Cathedral, Glasgow.

Collect for Purity - [BELLE]

**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

[JOHN] 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 - [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.

Collect - [OLIVER]

O God, from whose own abundance all gifts and skills are lavishly bestowed, encourage us to use our talents as generously as you have allotted them, so that, being faithful to your purpose, we may become sharers in your glory. 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 – second video

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46 – [MONICA]

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

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: 'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I

would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [JOHN]

So take the talent away from him and give it to the one with the ten talents ... As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Every once in three years, Matthew comes round in the lectionary and preachers who believe that Jesus proclaims a gospel of a merciful God of love and compassion start looking increasingly desperately for strategies for avoiding the relentless judgemental thrust of its later chapters.

But like it or not, I don't think you can reasonably deny that, as Matthew tells them, the stories of the man at the wedding feast without a wedding garment, of the wise and foolish virgins, of the talents all clearly say that not all will be included; that there will be those who are rejected, cast out from God's presence.

And I want to say, equally clearly that I find that to be wholly at odds with the view of God which I and we affirm here; and that I believe it runs straight contrary to Jesus' vision of a God who loves his enemies and who sends his rain on the just and the unjust; and who invites us to follow him down the path of such love.

So how do such thoughts of a God who not only judges those who fail to do God's will but casts them into outer darkness get into the Gospels? A big question to which I cannot give the full answer it deserves. But here is a start:

- 1) The stories we know as Jesus' parables will have been circulating among his followers for some 50 years before they found their way into Matthew's Gospel.
- 2) They were stories designed to help people think about the deep questions of life, thought experiments; they are stories to be retold, to help people grasp truths about God's ways, God's grace and love; about a God who keeps seeking for those who have lost their way, who reaches out to the afflicted and marginalised in our world.
- 3) Jesus, that is, started a school of storytelling and what we have in the Gospels are examples of those stories from different stages of its history. Some will have come from Jesus himself; others will have been added to the pool of stories by his followers.
- 4) So what of the story of the talents? It's a story about how powerful landowners use their money to control their lands and their tenants. The rich get more and the poor get less and are punished for it for good measure.
- 5) What does Matthew do with this? He sets it at a point in the Gospel where Jesus is talking about the coming of the Son of Man at the end of the present age to inaugurate a new world. When that will be, none knows (24:36). It may come later than expected (and catch out foolish virgins). The important thing is to be ready, waiting, prepared (24:44). Those who are ready, who have done as instructed, will enter into the newly founded kingdom; those who are not, will not, definitely not. Everything, life/death, in/out, depends on this.

So this becomes a story not about power and the relations between rich and poor but about slaves/disciples obeying instructions and paying the price for failure. It was an attempt to rally Matthew's community to continue to wait faithfully for the expected appearance of the Son of Man—and woe betide you, if you didn't!

But then: within a few generations (most of) Matthews's community would have gone in a very different direction and formed the core

of the Great Church, the emerging Catholic Church. A new more inclusive, universalist church would emerge. But the exclusivism of this stage would remain as part of the birthmarks of the church, part of the legacy with which we always need to deal. And the story itself prompts us to keep up the fight. Does not our heart go out to the third slave? How could he have kept up with the rich tenant farmers into whose operations the landlord had poured huge sums of money (1 talent = 5 years wages)? How could he compete with them, who controlled the local markets? We are indeed looking—still—for a new world order which will turn things upside down and bring justice to the poor. And into which all will be welcome. Only a world where all belong, even the poorest, can satisfy the restless love of God.

Intercessions [DEBBIE]

Creator God, we pray for our world. We pray for our planet, for nature in all its diversity and for all who work to protect our environment and sustain life. We pray for peace where there is conflict. Where people suffer poverty, and exploitation, we pray for justice. We hold in prayer the people of the United States at this time of transition and turmoil.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Sustaining God, you are our very life. We come to you in prayer for your Church across the world. We remember today the Church of Ceylon, its people and its leaders. We pray for Bishop Kevin, and for the churches of St Bride's in Hyndland and St Andrew's in Milngavie.

Here at St Mary's we pray for everyone who serves in the Leadership Group. May they be inspired in all they do.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Eternal God, we pray for our community. Fill our neighborhoods and our workplaces with your Holy Spirit. We ask you especially to

bles and sustain all who are seeking employment or who are facing redundancy. And we pray for all who are working to alleviate suffering at this time of pandemic. May they be safe and find the rest they need.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Redeeming God, may we always know your deep peace. We thank you for moments of beauty and times of joy. We pray for everyone whose days are a struggle and whose nights are sleepless. We hold before you those who are in need, praying for at this time, for baby Maren, and for those others, known or unknown to us, who need your healing.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray your blessing on all who have died recently. And we remember especially at this time, John Graham, whose year's mind is today. May they rest in peace, **and rise in glory.**

All this we pray in the name of our companion on the way, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Communion – third video

Offertory - [OLIVER]

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Thank you for your generosity.

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 - [JOHN]

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]

Ex Ore Innocentium - John Ireland

It is a thing most wonderful,
Almost too wonderful to be.
That God's own Son should come from Heaven,

And die to save a child like me.
And yet I know that it is true:
He chose a poor and humble lot,
And wept, and toiled, and mourned, and died,
For love of those who loved him not.
I sometimes think about the Cross,
And shut my eyes, and try to see
The cruel nails and crown of thorns,
And Jesus, crucified for me.
But even could I see him die,
I should but see a little part
Of that great love, which, like a fire,
Is always burning in his heart.
And yet I want to love thee, Lord;
Oh light the flame within my heart,
And I will love thee more and more,
Until I see thee as thou art.

Post Communion Prayer - [BELLE]

Gracious God, in this sacrament we have shared the body and blood of Christ. May we who have been nourished by holy things bear witness to his light, and share in his eternal priesthood; for he is Lord for ever and ever.

Amen.

Blessing - [OLIVER]

Thanks to all who have given their talents to make today's worship what it's been.

The master in today's Gospel praised those who acted boldly—for taking risks to get the best results. May God give us courage to take chances, too.

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.

Music

Excerpt from 'Fanfare' by CS Lang

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