

The Gathering

1 - Welcome - [KELVIN]

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

Hello and welcome to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow. My name is Kelvin Holdsworth and I am the provost here.

In the gospel this week we hear about the disciples arguing about which one of them was the most important. In responding to them, Jesus turns the whole conversation around and instead of talking about who is the most important, he speaks to them about what is the most important.

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral where we are all invited in turn to welcome Christ into our own lives.

3 - Collect for Purity - [DAVID]

**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 - [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 - [KELVIN]

O God, protector of the poor and defender of the just, in your kingdom the last become first, the gentle are strong, and the lowly exalted. Give us wisdom from above, that we may find in your servant Jesus the pattern of true discipleship and the grace to persevere in following 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 9:30-37 – [ABBY]

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

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious gospel

Praise to Christ our Lord.

12 - Sermon [JOHN]

‘Whoever wants to be first must be last and servant of all.’ – *Mark 9:35*

Our readings over the last couple of weeks have marked a great turning point in Mark’s Gospel: up until c. 8 Jesus’ progress through Galilee has been presented in triumphal terms, casting out demons, binding Satan, healing the sick, blind deaf and dumb, stilling the storm, walking on water, feeding the multitudes; now the crowds and the disciples must come to terms with the fact that the one on whom their hopes rest as saviour, Messiah, is going to Jerusalem to meet a cruel death AND that he calls them to follow him along the same way of the cross.

What does that mean for their understanding of power, of God, of service, of the life of discipleship?

In this passage, Jesus again repeats the solemn prediction of his passion and again questions his disciples: What were you arguing about on the way? They are embarrassed and silent, for they had been arguing about who was greatest – who would hold which position in the coming new world where Jesus would be recognised as the Lord’s anointed.

Jesus comes quickly to the point: Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.

The theme of power – and powerlessness runs through these chapters like a thread. Jesus tells his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. It is hard to imagine any more unbridled, merciless exercise of power than crucifixion, or indeed any more drastic experience of powerlessness, of condemnation, rejection, exclusion. The disciples are to put themselves in the place of the outcast, the victimised, the tortured: those at the mercy of all.

What does that say about their relations to one another: Anyone, says Jesus, who aspires to be first must put him/herself in the position of those who are last, who are at everyone’s beck and call, must be totally at their disposal.

This is paradoxical: leadership is about the exercise of power, how it is distributed, how exercised, about taking decisions on others' behalf. What can Jesus be saying? Let's get very specific.

We were talking recently to a remarkable woman who ran a care home for 5 years and now runs her own advisory services. She has been seriously deaf since birth and has known what exclusion, disadvantage and vulnerability is all about. She is and was profoundly concerned about the rights and wishes and freedoms of the people in her care. Too often the staff and her employers, would take decisions which they judged to be in the residents' best interests, which, they thought, protected them from the consequences of their own actions, their unwise decisions. They were not allowed to smoke, to have relatives visit, to go out... all in the interests of risk reductions, of their health and safety: often leading to a situation in which they were effectively prisoners unable to exercise any influence over their own lives.

What was important, she said, was first and foremost to understand what the residents wanted and that involved spending time with them, getting their trust and listening. For example: In the course of listening to what the residents wanted, she discovered that quite a few wanted to play table tennis. The immediate response of the staff was that this was far too dangerous. Nevertheless she persisted, encouraged by the remarkable Mental Capacity Act which insists that even where someone's capacity to make a decision may be deemed to be limited, decisions taken on their behalf must be in their best interests and the least restrictive of their freedoms possible.

A risk assessment was done, mitigating actions decided on (:no slippers, numbers of staff to be present, ...) relatives and friends were consulted and a framework agreed, and behold the ping pong started. Residents played each other, their children, their grandchildren. The exercise, the excitement, the exchange brought new life and a sense of enjoyment and wellbeing and the mood of the home was changed.

Is that too great a stretch from Jesus' challenge to his disciples?
Maybe not.

I suspect that what inspires our friend is by no means unconnected with her own experience of vulnerability and powerlessness and her remarkable ability to deal with it. She can put herself in the place of those whose lives have been taken over, their freedoms restricted and withdrawn, who feel trapped, who tragically can sometimes only express their frustration in aggression. She is determined to put their needs and wishes at the centre of her work in the care sector. Seeing things through the eyes of the poor and marginalised, as the liberation theologians might say, is the starting point for any action. It is the starting point for renewal, for new life.

None of this means that those who are given huge power over the lives of those with whom they work, should not exercise that power. It does mean that they should put their own interests last: that they should bend their wills to understanding the needs of those they serve and to working with them to realising them. That will bring genuine change and transformation.

Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all. It may be 2000 years old but it still strikes home.

14 - Intercessions [DEBBIE]

I ask your prayers for peace in the life of the world, for Afghanistan and for all places where there is fear, persecution and conflict.

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, especially those who have the power to make a fairer and more just society.

Pray for all who exercise power.

Silence

I ask your prayers for all whom we have wronged.

Pray for all who hate us.

Silence

I ask your prayers for our bishop Kevin, and for the Anglican Church of the Province of Uganda. For the churches of St Aidan's Clarkston and St Margaret's, Newlands. Here at the cathedral, for the office and administrator. For those who volunteer at St Mary's. And for all whom Christ has appointed to his service.

Pray for God's people.

Silence

I ask your prayers for those seeking asylum here in our community.

Pray for all who need our welcome and support.

Silence

Give thanks to God for all in whom Christ has been honoured, for Peter Thorpe and Kenneth Elliott whose year's mind is today, and for those who have died recently.

Silence

Amen.

Communion

17 - Offertory - [KELVIN]

We couldn't do what we do here at St Mary's without many offerings. Each of them is a sign of people believing that what we do here is important.

If you would like to join those who support this place financially then you can find out how to do so online at thecathedral.org.uk

Just click on Donate to St Mary's Cathedral

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
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.

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 - [HOSS]

Ruler of the universe, all creation yearns for its fulfilment in your Son. May we who have shared in holy things grow into maturity in him. This we ask in the name of the same 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 most important thing for Jesus was welcome – not simply that we would find that we were welcomed but that we in our turn would welcome God.

So I pray this week that you will be able to find occasions where you can welcome God in your contact with others.

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 - [STEVEN]

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