

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [KELVIN]

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

Hello and welcome to this Eucharist from St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow.

My name is Kelvin Holdsworth and I'm the Provost here.

Things are changing for all of us at the moment. Small changes for some, larger changes for others. From week to week, guidelines and rules around what we can each do at any given moment are constantly being reviewed and revised and change.

But let us lay that aside for this service of worship. And remember that when we draw close to God, we ourselves are changed. Sometimes slowly. Sometimes more rapidly. But changed so that we can in turn change our world.

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.**

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 - [KELVIN]

God of eternal wisdom, you alone impart the gift of right judgement. Grant us an understanding heart, that we may value wisely the treasure of your kingdom and gladly forgo all lesser gifts to possess that kingdom's incomparable joy. 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

Reading: Matthew 13:1-9,18-23 – [HEATHER]

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

Jesus put before his disciples a parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

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

Sermon [SISTER HELENA]

Where do we start with this Gospel? The temptation, since so many of us have been baking in lockdown, is to concentrate on talking about the process and even the chemistry that lets us arrive at that perfectly risen, heavenly smelling loaf fresh from the oven. Somehow the reality of the bread gets a bit lost, as does its relationship to faith, to the Eucharist, and to Christian community.

Now that churches may begin to reopen, we are busily imagining how that would work—numbers, distancing, hygiene. The Province has put out a video about what a properly safe Eucharist should look like, and with the small, obedient, and not exactly gregarious group depicted and litres of hand sanitizer, it worked on a public health level, and doubtless *ex opere operato* on a sacramental level. That's theologians' fancy way of saying 'it works because it works'.

At our Zoom coffee hour last Sunday there was much discussion both theoretical and practical about the 'feel' as well as the logistics of liturgy under the current circumstances. Even the most introverted humans are communal creatures, and long for tangible expressions of that, from the bread and wine to the companionship with friends and fellow worshipers. Perhaps the most telling comment on the video wasn't intended as a pun, but almost had me laughing, if one can laugh sadly: Quoth she: 'It was sterile.'

The Eucharist is more than ritual and more than a communal meal. Now that restaurants and pubs are reopening both those things can be accessible on a purely human level. What is it about that tiny wafer and watered wine that we long for besides the human need for communion, for sharing. For sharing what?

More blood has been shed over the meaning of that morsel of bread than Jesus and all the Apostles shed. Some say it is just a symbol, but those of a sacramental persuasion have coined all sorts of fancy words to explain how the elements become the Body and Blood of Christ. Myself, I agree with Queen Elizabeth I—he said it was and I believe what he said is true. The Real Presence is a Mystery, with a capital M, take it or leave it.

I rarely remember sermons, even my own, but one has stuck with me even in the millennium or so since university. The preacher had once been stunned by someone saying to him, 'If you truly believed that Christ is there in the Eucharist the awe of it would drive you to your knees in wonder, and you'd never be able to tear yourself away.'

Apart from the dangers, from viral to ideological, of the Sacrament described by Elizabeth Anderson* there is the very real danger that the Eucharist will do in us exactly what it is intended to do—what an intimate encounter with Christ must do if we allow it to work in us, namely change us radically, and change our perspective on other people and on the world we live in, blowing all

our preconceptions and behaviors to smithereens and reassembling the fragments in some unimaginably new creation

The word Eucharist itself means ‘thanksgiving’, and to dwell on the logistics of liturgy in time of plague from a mindset of deprivation doesn’t convey thanksgiving. Whenever the Eucharist is offered, whether we are able to receive the consecrated elements or not, it is offered for us all, even as Christ’s Incarnation, his ministry, his crucifixion, and his Resurrection were offered, to heal our separations and to seal our renewed oneness as members of the Body of Christ, not just as a collectivity, nor as isolated individuals. The Eucharist is a reminder and a commission—we are to be the body and blood of Christ to each other, for Christ is now embodied in us, not just in the historical Jesus once upon a time.

We are called to be holy as he is holy, as generous as he was in his compassion and as self-emptying as he was in his sacrifice on the Cross.

There are all sorts of reasons why we want to come back to church, and to the Eucharist ‘as normal.’ But it was never meant to be ‘normal’ in the somewhat complacent normalcy we took for granted before Covid-19.

The Eucharist is not just a memorial and a reminder of a past world-changing event. It is, like all sacraments, ‘the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.’ Beyond that, it is not simply something we are given, it is something we are by our incorporation into Christ. It is not just something we give either. It is something we must become—not just for each other but in ourselves. This is still the time, or perhaps even more urgently the time, to value ourselves as God values us—worth creating, out of love, not necessity. Worth infinite self-sacrifice of God’s own self. As a little girl once said we should internalize: ‘God made me and God don’t make junk.’ When we devalue ourselves we devalue

each other, and fall prey to a cancerous inverse pride that keeps us from being a Thanksgiving for ourselves or anyone else.

There is a homely Spanish expression that conveys far more than all the superlatives we can imagine: 'mas bueno que el pan'. Better than bread.

One day we will all be able to gather round the altar and share the bread and the cup together, both receiving and being the Body of Christ in that communal worship. But until then we are called to become eucharist for ourselves and each other—deep, conscious thanksgiving for all God's gifts to us, including the ones we cannot yet see. We are called to be better than bread. We are called to be both sacrament and thanksgiving.

Then, when we can return to the altar to receive Christ in the Eucharist we will have a deeper experiential understanding of who it is who receives us even as we receive him, and catch at least a momentary glimpse of that glory.

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*Elizabeth Anderson, Purity and Danger: Eucharistic Safety in a Time of Pandemic. EARTHANDALTARMAG.com

Intercessions [DEBBIE]

Almighty God, we pray for our world. Where there is conflict and violence, we ask for your peace. Bring hope to all who are persecuted. We pray for all people who are living with or dying of Coronavirus and its effects. Bless all who are working to alleviate suffering and help us too, to be bearers of comfort, hope and of change.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Sustaining God, you are the bread of life. We pray for your Church across the world. Be with all who seek you. We pray for Bishop

Kevin. We ask your blessing on the clergy and community of St Cuthbert's, Cambuslang and of St Mark's, in East Kilbride. Here at St Mary's we pray for everyone working for the safe continuation of worship and of the full life of the Cathedral.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

God of the earth, we pray for our community. In our city, we pray for equality and economic regeneration at this time of precarious livelihoods. Help us to protect our natural spaces and to cherish the wildlife, waters and greenery of our city and beyond. Come to us all so that we may live out your gospel of love, life and community, here and now.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Faithful God, we thank you for the things that bring us joy. We pray for those in pain, loneliness or isolation. We hold before you those who need our prayers.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Holy God, we pray your eternal blessing on those who have died recently, including Andrew Mlangeni. And we remember especially at this time Isabel Margaret Holmer and Margaret Robinson whose year's mind is today.

May they rest in peace,

And rise in glory.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour,

Amen.

Communion – third video

Offertory - [KELVIN]

God is good and has blessed us with many things. One of the things God blesses us with is the capacity to be generous.

If you would like to make a financial contribution to the work of St Mary's, please go to the website – thecathedral.org.uk and click on make a donation.

Eucharistic Prayer - [KELVIN]

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 - [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.**

Music at Communion - [ROSAMOND]

O love of God, how strong and true,
eternal and yet ever new,
uncomprehended and unbought,
beyond all knowledge and all thought!

O wide-embracing, wondrous love!
We read thee in the sky above,
we read thee in the earth below,
in seas that swell and streams that flow.

We read thee best in him who came
to bear for us the cross of shame;
sent by the Father from on high,
our life to live, our death to die.

We read thy pow'r to bless and save,
e'en in the darkness of the grave;
still more in resurrection light
we read the fullness of your might.

Words: Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

Blessing - [KELVIN]

We give thanks to you Lord for you are gracious
And your mercy endures forever.

Sister Helena has reminded us in her sermon that a Eucharist is a great thanksgiving. Part of my thanksgiving at the altar is for those who have helped make this worship happen and those who have taken part by watching and joining in online.

There's an online coffee hour at 12 noon each Sunday. Last week those who were there had a discussion about the way forward for the cathedral community. If you want to receive the details of how to join such conversations, just sign up for the regular email updates on the website – thecathedral.org.uk – and remember to click on the confirmation message, which may have gone into your email spam box.

For now though,

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 and those whom you love, this day and always.

Amen.

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