

The Gathering

Welcome - [KELVIN]

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

A warm welcome to St Mary's. And a warm welcome to what's called Ordinary Time in the church. The Easter Season and the festivals that come after it is over. The green vestments are back. And together we embark on a season of growth - learning about the life and stories of Jesus.

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow as we draw closer to one another as we draw close to him.

I'm Kelvin Holdsworth, the Provost here, and I invite you to join a congregation spread out across the city and across the world as we pray today.

Collect for Purity - [ANNE]

**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

[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 - [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 - [KELVIN]

God our redeemer,

in Jesus, your promised Messiah,
you crushed the power of Satan.

Sustain your Church in the struggle against evil,
that, hearing your word and doing your will, we may be fashioned
into a household of true disciples
who share in the victory of the cross.

Grant 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

GOSPEL: Mark 3.20-35 – [HOSS]

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

The crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and

they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [OLIVER]

When I read today’s Gospel, I recognised something. I couldn’t put my finger on it at first, but the interactions were familiar. I’d heard this kind of thing before. People said Jesus had gone out of his mind. The scribes went so far as to call him possessed. Perhaps it was hyperbole, yes. But the way these sweeping generalisations sought to control and write off what the crowd didn’t agree with made me think, ‘It’s more than that.’

So, I did a bit of Googling, and it turns out there’s a name for what I noticed. It’s something called a thought-terminating cliché. The term was first coined by American psychiatrist and author Robert Jay Lifton in the 1950s. I’d never heard this expression before, but now that I have, more makes sense about how I’ve been feeling and experiencing things lately. I have some insight into the ways we’ve been having conversations.

Like it says on the tin, a thought-terminating cliché is a turn of phrase that terminates thought. It neither responds to the points raised in a debate nor addresses a matter directly. A thought-terminating cliché suggests the answer is clear and common sense—a shared experience, an obvious answer. Some examples include ending a conversation with a phrase like, ‘I’m just saying’. (This indicates you can’t argue with me; I’m entitled to my opinion.) Or concluding, ‘I guess it isn’t ours to question why’ (an attempt to suppress further analysis and inquiry). Or, figuring, ‘Where there’s smoke, there’s fire!’ (implying a person’s guilt with no further examination of evidence needed). In just a few words, the matter is closed.

In the now-famous Axios interview with Jonathan Swan, Donald Trump attempted to end the discussion of his administration's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic by saying that people are dying, 'That's true, and ... it is what it is'. During complex discussions surrounding the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, some politicians maintained simply, 'Brexit means Brexit' as if it weren't any more complicated than that. And those who answer, 'All lives matter' to those who say 'Black lives matter' conclude the topic without ever addressing the heart of the matter. And that's what certain people in today's Gospel were doing, too. They said that's crazy talk—Jesus is out of his mind (meaning you can't reason with that; it's pointless even to try).

So, where's the conversation to go from there? It feels pointless to continue talking after the thought-terminating cliché, to examine anything further. Its construction makes it seem like the end of the road. But Jesus doesn't let the 'semantic stop-sign' shut down this conversation. He addresses the statements that try to silence his voice while exposing the error of their logic. 'How can Satan cast out Satan?' he asks. 'If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand.' Jesus says he is clearing out evil, restoring people to life and community, building a new human family. He challenged their loaded language, and that took guts.

Navigating thought-terminating endings is difficult, especially because some of these phrases or verbal constructs have become so prevalent. We're used to them. It isn't that people are always trying to stop dialogue or independent thought. (Sometimes, we're just tired and want to say, 'Can we bookmark this for later?') I suspect mostly we use these clichés without thinking. But that's the risk: that clichés infuse our thought processes so much that we use them as crutches, substitutes for words that engage or acknowledge that more thought is needed—that there's more to say, more to find out.

It's funny. Now that I know about the thought-terminating cliché, I hear it everywhere. It's like someone pointing out something in an image (how it resembles something or other or there's a hidden

part to it), and you can't unsee it. The worrying part is not having noticed it before. But that's got to change, and here's the place from which I plan to start.

Today's Gospel gives impetus to explore the uncomfortable conversations some don't want to have and unbridle our problem-solving creativity. I vow to pay more attention to rhetoric, and maybe you'll want to, too. When self-reflection is casually discouraged, curiosity quashed, and inquiry suppressed, take note. Jesus didn't let dismissive language go unchallenged. He didn't consent to end the conversation when it wasn't over, and neither should we. We don't need to stop talking. We need more conversation—new solutions, not old clichés.

Intercessions [ROBERT]

Holy God we bring you our prayers for the world, the church and our communities.

We pray for the peoples of your world, in their diversity and in their needs. For those who work for justice, for those whose energies are employed in political process, for those who work in the international struggle of cyber attacks. In our differences, and in our competing needs, may we be one in your service.

We pray for the community that enriches us, especially for Banks and financial institutions. In the services we enjoy and in the wealth we share, may we be your people; that grace may extend to more and more.

We pray for family and friends. Glad with those for whom life feels good at this time, we pray your blessings... Sorry with those for whom life feels dark at this time, we pray your comfort...

We pray for your church around the world, called to do your will. We pray for Bishop Kevin; and within the diocese for the churches of St John the Evangelist, Annan; St John the Evangelist, Eastriggs, All Saints, Gretna, All Saints, Lockerbie and St John the Evangelist, Moffat; and we pray for Martin Callaghan, Melvyn Redgers, Paul Singh and John Stevenson. We pray for the Church

of the Province of Myanmar. May we do your will as one people united in faith.

We pray for those who grieve at this time. May they know your comfort. We honour the memory of those who have died, and whose life and faith have inspired us. In our year's mind we remember Ernest Bacchus. In the spirit of faith we pray,

May they Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

Holy God we bring You our prayers in the faith that You are the source of justice and life.

Amen.

Communion

Offertory - [KELVIN]

This week I celebrated my fifteenth year as the Provost of St Mary's Cathedral, so I've got a lot to be thankful for as I approach the table today.

You too may have much to be thankful for. I invite you to bring your thanksgivings to this table and offer them to God. If you are able to respond to God's generosity with generosity of your own then you will find details of how to make a financial offering on the website - thecathedral.org.uk.

And thank you for your gift.

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 - [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:

SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS - [SHAE]

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 - [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.

Music at Communion - []

Jesu, my love, my joy, my rest,
Thy perfect love close in my breast.
That I thee love and never rest;
And make me love thee all things best,
And wounde my heart in they love free,
That I may reign in joy evermore with thee.

*words and music by John Rutter, sung by the Cathedral Choir,
recorded at a live service in 2019. Friikki Walker conducting,
Steven McIntyre on the organ.*

Image: Madonna of Humility, Fra Angelico, c. 1440 Rijksmuseum

Post Communion Prayer - [ANNE]

O God, we have shared in the mysteries of the body and blood of Christ. Nourish us by this feast, that we may live the risen life and serve you faithfully in the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing - [KELVIN]

It has been good to worship together in this way today. In the week that is ahead, do keep in mind the General Synod which meets on Thursday and Friday. No doubt there will be information about what it decides which will appear on social media.

And if you are finding a way into this congregation or would like a conversation with someone about how you might do so, then please fill in an online welcome card. Just go to thecathedral.org.uk and click on the word welcome on the front page.

But now the blessing...

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]

Prelude (Suite Medievale) - Jean Langlais

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

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