

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [OLIVER]

Welcome to this service for Ascension Day from St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow. I'm the Vice Provost, Oliver Brewer-Lennon. I'm leading today's celebration from my home. The bells you just heard were from the Cathedral, recorded by our ringers before the lockdown.

This feast day takes its name from the act of rising, upward motion. The Gospel records this as what the disciples saw as the resurrected Jesus departed from them. Jesus ascended to a higher place—a place the disciples longed to go, too.

In the twenty-first century, we still find ourselves stretching heavenwards. And, we don't have to be jet pilots or space explorers to experience that. We climb, we move up, we expand and increase our understanding and experience—even now, with earthbound feet.

The imagery used in today's service reflects some daily ascents, walking around the City of Glasgow—the small ways in which we move regularly from one level to another. As we participate in this Eucharist, let us find ourselves drawn upwards in prayer, towards the places we connect with God.

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]

[KELVIN] 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 our sins, heal and strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria (*in Latin*)

Translation:

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 majesty, yours is the power that raised Christ from death, yours the glory that exalted him to your right hand. By the mystery of the Ascension, sustain our hope as we bear witness to our baptism. By the perpetual outpouring of your Spirit, confirm your Church in its mission of salvation. Grant this through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead, 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: Luke 24:44-53 - [HEATHER]

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

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

Then Jesus said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [BISHOP MARK]

Today the Disciples returned to the temple filled with joy and praising God.

The day of Ascension, the day of physical departure brought joy and praise not weeping and wailing. Why?

They had just lost the one person who could change everything, the one they thought they had lost but who had returned to them, they should have been devastated but here they were praising

God. In the days that followed they used the time to select a new Apostle to replace Judas, Peter addressed 120 followers and Jesus's mother was there with them, not in deep mourning but listening and praying. What on earth was going on.

Well today we have reached the end of the beginning of the resurrection story, we have celebrated the day of Resurrection, we have walked with the disciples to Emmaus, we have questioned with Thomas, we have, as our own liturgy puts it "been with the weary fishermen on the shore" and we have wept and rejoiced with Mary Magdalene.

Now we are to be witnesses of the culmination of the promises made by God through the incarnation of his Son. To give thanks for the beginning of the new relationship, a relationship with the Christ enthroned in Glory.

The disciples went from The Mount of Olives rejoicing because they understood that the arrival of the Spirit that they awaited was the filling of the church with the presence of God Father Son and Holy Spirit. The revelation that Jesus sitting at the right hand of God was the opening of our spiritual connection with highest heaven. Jesus's return to the heavenly throne was the completion of the journey and the beginning of a new and powerful relationship that affected each one of them and began the mission and teaching of the church from a position of power and joy, not fear and weakness.

Now they could face the most horrific situations secure in the knowledge that they were destined for the glory of the company of Jesus, not the man in Galilee but the Intercessor in Highest Heaven.

This I say is how we should feel, how we should react, our Saviour has sacrificed himself for us and now through the power of God awaits us.

Unfortunately we too often relegate Jesus to be a man continually walking this earth, wiping away our tears, turning the other cheek, being nice to children, the heavenly social worker, always busy, always ready to lend a hand or to listen to us when we remember to speak to him. That means that we are also tempted to treat the church, the body of Christ in the same way, something that should be always busy, doing good things, it is the reason so much social media energy is being used up by those who feel the church is failing because it isn't doing something during the crisis.

We are however being Resurrection people, giving thanks and praising God, we are doing it in our homes, on our hillsides and in our hospitals, we are doing every time we sit down and pray and every time we share an act of worship by recording, live streaming or simply sharing prayers with other at the same time in many places.

The good works came out of the power of prayer and worship, they are intimately linked but it is prayer and praise that connect us to the heavenly throne.

So today rejoice, the pathway to God is clear, the Heavenly throne is resplendent and our Saviour Jesus is with us in Spirit and in love. Alleluia!

Prayer-Poem [FRIKKI]

God is gone up with a triumphant shout:
The Lord with sounding trumpets' melodies:
Sing praise, sing praise, sing praise, sing praises out,
Unto our King sing praise seraphic-wise!
Lift up your heads, ye lasting doors, they sing,
And let the King of Glory enter in.

Methinks I see Heaven's sparkling courtiers fly
In flakes of glory down, him to attend,
And hear heart-cramping notes of melody
Surround his chariot as it did ascend:

Mixing their music, making ev'ry string
More to enravish, as they this tune sing.

Edward Taylor (1646? - 1729)

Communion – third video

'You are witnesses of these things', Jesus told his disciples. As a community, St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow strives to be witness, too. It is a place in which all are invited to play a part.

If you would like to contribute to this community by making a financial contribution, click 'Donate to St Mary's Cathedral' on our website, www.thecathedral.org.uk.

As the grain once scattered in the fields
And the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
Are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,
So, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together
From the corners of the earth
Into your kingdom. **Amen.**

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, Author of all being.

Your power sustains, your love restores, our broken world.

You are unceasingly at work,

from chaos bringing order

and filling emptiness with life.

Christ, raised from the dead,
proclaims the dawn of hope.
He lives in us that we may walk in light.

Your Spirit is fire in us,
your breath is power
to purge our sin
and warm our hearts to love.

As children of your redeeming purpose,
freed by him who burst from the tomb
and opened the gate of life,
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.**

Praise and thanksgiving be to you,
Lord of all,
for by the Cross eternal life is ours
and death is swallowed up in victory.
In the first light of Easter glory broke from the tomb
and changed the women's sorrow into joy.
From the Garden the mystery dawned
that he whom they had loved and lost
is with us now in every place for ever.

Making himself known in the breaking of the bread,
speaking peace to the fearful disciples,
welcoming weary fishermen on the shore,

he renewed the promise of his presence
and of new birth in the Spirit
who sets the seal of freedom on your sons and daughters.

Before he was given up to suffering and death,
recalling the night of Israel's release,
the night in which slaves walked free,
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

Today we cannot each receive the bread and wine in person but God is present in this world.

As we gaze in our adoration we feed on God in our hearts and minds that we may in turn feed the world.

Music

Telemann – Siciliana from *Sonata in A-minor* - [LES AND RONA]

Blessing & Dismissal

Thanks to everyone who has made this service and services like it at the Cathedral possible.

Today, the Church has recalled the moment the resurrected Jesus was taken up into heaven. He did not, however, leave his disciples alone; instead, he left them with a promise: they would be clothed with power from on high. May God's Spirit cover you this day with strength to walk the road ahead.

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and the

blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be upon you this day and forever more. **Amen.**

Voluntary

Telemann – Spiritoso from *Sonata in A-minor* - [LES AND RONA]

A choir anthem is available on the online worship page at
www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship.