

Transcript of online worship – 22 March 2020

The Gathering – first video

Organ – first of Three Versets in F Major by Domenico Zipoli

Welcome

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

Welcome. My name is Olver Brewer-Lennon. I'm the Vice Provost here at St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow. Today I'm joined by others including you wherever you're watching this from to celebrate Holy Communion.

The gospel today speaks of vision. Both physical sight and spiritual insight. In these confusing times when we are struggling to figure out what's going on, let us seek God and in the light of Christ find what God is calling us to do.

Confession and Absolution

God is love and we are his 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.

God, who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from our sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Kyrie eleison

Christe eleison

Kyrie eleison

Collect

God our creator, show forth your mighty works in the midst of your people. Enlighten your church that we may know your Son as the true

light of the world and through our worship confess him as Christ and Lord; who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, holy and mighty God forever and ever. Amen.

The Ministry of the Word – second video

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Glory to Christ our Saviour

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel

Praise to Christ our Lord

Sermon

When I was a student, I had one particularly great theology teacher. She had an extraordinary mind and was one of the best teachers I've ever had – and her particular interest was feminist theology.

So good was she was the students of the Divinity Faculty I was in couldn't get enough.

We decided to invite her to come and address the Theological Society of the University one evening on the topic of prayer. She agreed to come

and a small group of people were asked to do the publicity. Now, this was way back when – before emails, before facebook, before twitter, before websites. So it meant designing a poster and pinning it up all over the place.

Someone designed a poster and they started going up.

And a huge row immediately got underway. The eminent theologian objected very strongly to the poster.

And the thing that she objected to was that someone had used the graphic of Durer's engraving of a pair of praying hands.

"A pair of men's hands" said the feminist theologian. Not what I'm interested in at all.

And a discussion had to be hastily got underway about how to illustrate prayer.

"Well what image do you want?" someone asked. "What does prayer look like anyway".

And the theologian said, "It looks like a web of connectedness spread all over the world".

Now this was long before we became familiar with the internet. The idea of a web of connectedness was quite an odd one.

But somehow it comes back to me today as a powerful image of what prayer is.

The current crisis that we are living through is extraordinary, unprecedented and very frightening. It has changed completely how we see things.

Within a week, the way we are as a church has changed. The church hasn't closed but the church has changed and looks very different today to what it looked like last Sunday.

We are gathered now across the city and across the world in a way we have never gathered before – separated physically but still called to be together somehow and to witness somehow, in our new situation, to God's unending love.

In our Gospel this morning, the disciples get into a conversation about why someone had been born unable to see. Was it him sinning or his parents. Jesus is having none of it. He was born that God's works might be revealed in him.

What caused this virus – our own sins or those of our parents?

Or someone else – the inevitable others whom we want to blame?

Jesus's answer is good for us today too.

We are in this place in order that God's works might be revealed through us.

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" Jesus says.

In a couple of weeks we will celebrate Palm Sunday. It is our custom to read the Passion Gospel at St Mary's with the congregation reading all the words of Jesus – for we *are* the body of Christ in the world right now.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world, says Jesus. Light that shines right now both in simple acts of kindness and in the extraordinary commitment of those fighting hardest to combat the effects of the coronavirus that so threatens us.

I realised somewhere in the middle of this strange and confusing week that the mobilisation of humanity to try to protect the weakest and the most vulnerable was a miracle I was seeing before my eyes. It seems that the age of miracles is not over, after all.

Jesus told the blind man to wash. And can be heard in the voices of those telling us to wash our hands to protect others.

Jesus does something practical and caring for the man. And he can be seen in the acts of care and love that are going on all over the world.

I have no doubt that we will see differently because of what is happening to us now. Things we never saw before will become plain.

Much is changed. Much is cancelled. Much is postponed.

But the love of God is never cancelled or postponed.

And that love has always been particular there for those most vulnerable, frightened and alone.

As the prayer of the church and all our actions in the world build new webs of connectedness, remember that wherever love is, God is found. And remember too that in whatever situation you find yourself now, alone or with others, God loves you with a love that will never end.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

[Intercessions – see subtitles on the video]

Communion – third video

As we gather around this holy table we present ourselves – all that we are and all that we have – and offer it to God. We are stewards of God's abundance; caretakers of all entrusted to us. If you would like to make a financial contribution to this cathedral, find bank details on our website.

www.thecathedral.org.uk

Pray that we may use our gifts wisely and use them to bear witness to God's love in the world.

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 him thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you,
maker of light and darkness.
Your wisdom draws beauty from chaos,
brings a harvest out of sorrow
and leads the exiles home.

In Christ your Son enemies are reconciled,
debts forgiven
and strangers made welcome
Your Spirit frees us
to live as sons and daughters
in our Father's house.
We who by Christ's power
follow the way of the Cross,

sharing the joy of his obedience,
now 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.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you
most loving Father,
for Christ in whom the world is reconciled.
Lifted on the Cross,
his suffering and forgiveness
spanned the gulf our sins had made.
Through that dark struggle
death was swallowed up in victory,
that life and light might reign.
Before he was given up to suffering and death,
recalling the night of Israel's release,
the night in which the sons of Egypt died,
your Chosen One, himself the First-Born,

freely offered his life.
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.

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.
Lord, unite us in this sign.

**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**

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.

Blessing – see subtitles in video.

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you
And the blessing of God Almighty
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen

Organ Voluntary (Steven McIntyre) -
Marcel Dupré - Marian Antiphon V: "How Fair and how Pleasant art Thou"