

Iona Evening Prayers October 2022 – Theme: Homelessness

Welcome and Introduction

Gathering song:

Let us build a house where love can dwell
And all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions.
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Greeting:

Leader: We meet in the presence of God, whose love knows bounds and from whose love we can never be separated.
In the presence of God

All: We gather in thanks.

Confession:

Leader: It is important that we recognise the times when we have turned away from God's ways and hold them before God.
In doing this together we recognise our shared humanity, our shared brokenness, and, our shared kinship in Christ.
Loving God, you called upon us to love all as our neighbour. For the times when we have not done this, and turned from Your way, we are sorry.
Lord have mercy.

All: Lord have mercy.

Leader: Loving God, you remind us, in your Son, that when we serve others, we serve you.
For the times we have turned from Your way, and not done this, we are sorry.
Lord have Mercy.

All Lord have mercy.

Leader: When we turn to God and acknowledge our sins, we are forgiven.
The mercy of God knows no bounds. The grace of God is endless.
So, here in the presence of God, we say sorry for the times we have turned from His ways and we turn back, giving thanks for the His gifts of compassion and forgiveness.

Amen

**Chant: Take, O take me as I am, summon out what I shall be.
Set your seal upon my heart, and live in me. (x 4)**

Reading 1 The daughters of Zelophehad

Here, in a relatively unknown biblical story, we meet the five daughters of Zelophehad. The scene is set within the context where the people of Israel have been wandering through the wilderness for forty years. They are in sight of the Promised Land, and Moses, instructed by God, undertakes a new census in order to determine how to divide up the land. The census counted only men, as per the patriarchal context of the time, and the expectation was that the land would be given only to

men. However, this was a problem for the five daughters as their father had died during the forty years and they had no brothers. They faced being left in the precarious situation of having no land or inheritance. Despite their status as women with no means, they take their case to Moses, asking for a share of their inheritance. Moses takes their request to God, who declares that the women should be given an inheritance, thereby securing them a future and some land to live on.

Listen now for the word of God

Numbers 27: 1-11.

Reading 2. Matthew 5: 1-11

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Leader: These passages point to themes of justice, and to speaking out against injustice, and with people who find themselves in unjust positions.

The beatitudes highlight the plight of people on the margins, often as a result of injustice. When Jesus blesses those who in this life are hungry and oppressed, he isn't saying that we should seek poverty, sorrow or being verbally abused. He is saying that God is present with us even when people in power demean and exclude us. He is highlighting injustice.

The five daughters spoke up and sought justice for their position in a world that discriminated against them unfairly. Their act of speaking up was a very brave act. Maybe they felt emboldened because they had each other. They could stand together in solidarity. God responded by removing the injustice so that the women could have a home.

We find blessing seeking the way of God and loving the people God loves – by speaking out against injustice and standing by people affected by injustice. How can we stand in solidarity alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ today who face unjust situations that can lead them to facing the prospect of homelessness?

Discussion: Please feel free to bring any stories of homelessness which are particularly on your mind at this time

Song: Do not offer me your money if that is all you have to give
though my clothes may be in tatters and my flesh too frail to live.
For my dignity will clothe me, it does not depend on you.
God intended, God revealing, it will let my spirit through.

Do not offer me your pity, if that is all you have to spare,
though I am spat upon and taunted, and nobody seems to care.
For the light that shines within me, reflects the glory that is God,
and although I walk in darkness, it cannot extinguish God.

Do not offer me your answers if that is all that you can do,
though you see me as a problem in the unemployment queue.
I am a person, not a statistic, my life is pleasing to the Lord
by that grace I am of value, holy, human, is the word.

Do not offer me your comfort, if you will not give your love,
though I'm bleeding, broken, helpless, caught whichever way I move.
Oh, awake your heart to courage, do not soothe it into sleep,
for to live in faith is costly, but indifference is cheap.

Prayers:

Leader:

Living God, you have taught us through Jesus that our neighbours are not just those who live next door, or those who live nearby, but everyone, everywhere. So now, once again we pray for our world and neighbours far and near.

Lord of heaven and earth, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the victims of injustice –

those who live in poverty, face starvation, or have no roof over their heads.

Lord of heaven and earth, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those denied their basic human rights -

a basic education, freedom of speech and conscience, or the proper reward for their labours.

Lord of heaven and earth, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the victims of natural disasters and climate change -

Those whose homes, loved ones, and lives have been destroyed through flood, earthquake, or other catastrophe.

Lord of heaven and earth, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the victims of war -

Those who mourn loved ones, those maimed and wounded, and those forced to flee as refugees, leaving possessions, livelihoods, and everything they hold dear behind.

Lord of heaven and earth, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who work for change –

Organising and transporting relief supplies, offering resources such as food banks, community kitchens and opportunities for self-help; those striving to overcome exploitation and oppression and campaigning for peace and justice for all.

Lord of heaven and earth, **Hear our Prayer.**

Prayer for world homeless week.

All: Almighty God of refuge and strength, in whose image we are all made, and who is a home to any who are in need or trouble; inspire us with your spirit of love, empower us to work for change, direct our actions towards any who need food, comfort, shelter and sanctuary and help us to live as one with one another. Amen

Song:

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,

Lord in the suffering, this is our prayer.

Bread for the children, justice, joy peace,

Sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase

Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills

Work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills.

Land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,

voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.

.....Chorus: **God of the poor, friend of the weak,
Gives us compassion, we pray
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain.
Come, change our love from a spark to a flame.**

**Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities for sanctu'ry, freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing fields, scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.**

**Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned, our future our dreams.
Lord, end this madness, carelessness greed:
Make us content with the things that we need.Chorus:**

**Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns brightly again:
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.Chorus:**

Conclusion

Leader The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger
All **He is abounding in steadfast love**

The Lord is good to all and his compassion is over all that he has made.
May we give thanks and look upon each other with the same compassion.

The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.
May we rest in his presence and bring peace to our neighbours.

The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.
**May our mouths speak praise of the Lord, and bless his holy name for ever
and ever.**

Blessing: **May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with us all.
May the light of Jesus shine in our hearts.
And may the presence of the Holy Spirit bring to all justice, hope, rest and
refuge. Amen**

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Church Homeless Trust, World Homeless Week service written by Rev'd Grace Thomas*

IN NOVEMBER PERSHORE ABBEY IONA WILL BE DIFFERENT!

We are going to be providing a warm welcome, Christmas music and a Christmas craft activity for people to make and take away, during the **'Christmas Tree Light Switch On' Fair**. Come along and help create a peaceful, reflective space in the midst of the Christmas buzz:
Between 14:00 and 17:00 on Sunday 27th November in St Andrew's Centre