

# Pershore Abbey Iona Service 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024 5pm

## Theme: Jesus and other faiths

### Welcome and Introduction:

**Gathering Song:** ♪ God welcomes all, strangers and friends.  
God's love is strong and it never ends. (x3)

### Opening Responses:

**Leader:** How good and how pleasant it is

**All:** **when people live in unity!**

*(During the next responses, 3 candles will be lit)*

**Leader:** In the beginning, before time, before people, before the world was

**All:** **God was.**

**Leader:** Here and now among us, beside us, enlisting the people of earth for the purposes of heaven,

**All:** **God is.**

**Leader:** In the future, when we have turned to dust and all we know has found its fulfilment,

**All:** **God will be.**

**Leader:** Not denying the world, but delighting in it,  
Not condemning the world, but redeeming it,  
Through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit,

**All:** **God was.**

**God is.**

**God will be.**

### Bible Reading: (Luke 7:1-10)

**Reader:** Listen now to the Word of God:

After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, 'He is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us.' And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, 'Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; therefore, I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to another, "Come", and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this", and the slave does it.' When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.' When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

.....(PAUSE FOR REFLECTION).....

**Reader:** For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us.

**All:** **Thanks be to God.**

## **Brief reflection:**

Other passages when Jesus comes face to face with a person of a different faith include:

- the Roman governor Pilate (John 18-19);
- the Canaanite woman with a sick daughter (Matthew 15);
- the Samaritan leper grateful for his healing (Luke 17);
- the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4);
- the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10);
- and many unnamed sick and demon-possessed people from the regions of Syria and the Decapolis who were most likely not Jewish (Matthew 4 & 8; Mark 3 & 7).

Someone has done research analysing what Jesus actually did when coming face to face with someone of another faith. The results may surprise you:

What Jesus did:

- healed the sick
- delivered the demonically oppressed
- told people to tell others what God had done for them
- praised people for their great faith
- praised people as examples of what God wants
- announced they would feast in heaven with the earlier prophets.

Only when he was asked did Jesus reveal himself as Messiah (John 4) and King (John 18).

What Jesus didn't do:

- follow his own Jewish culture's prejudicial norms
- condemn or rebuke
- warn of judgment or hell
- argue theology, debate, quote the Scriptures, ask if people wanted to know the Gospel, or ask people to change *anything*.

## **Song:** 🎵

*A paraphrase of Psalm 147.*

*(Known Unknown 66 - Sing to God with joy and gladness. Tune Shipston)*

- 1. Sing to God with joy and gladness, hymns and psalms of gratitude;  
with the voice of praise discover, that to worship God is good.**
- 2. God unites the scattered people, gathers those who wandered far,  
heals the hurt and broken spirits, tending every wound and scar.**
- 3. Such is God's great power and wisdom, none can calculate or tell;  
God is keen to ground the wicked, and with humble folk to dwell.**
- 4. God, with clouds, the sky has curtained, thus ensuring rain will fall;  
earth, responding, grows to order, food for creatures great and small.**
- 5. God's discernment never favours, strength or speed to lift or move;  
God invites us to show reverence, trusting in his steadfast love.**

**Time to share:**

*On the table are some quotations – some appealing, some controversial. Please have a look, and ponder...*

**Prayers:** *(adapted from prayers by Andy Williams, Moderator, Baptist Inter Faith Working Group)*

**Leader:** Creator God, we thank you for the amazing diversity of your creation. So much life, expressed in different forms, living in a huge variety of ways.

We thank you that this diversity is expressed in human life, people all made in your image, yet living, believing and hoping in different ways.

Many gather together, expressing shared beliefs, as part of faith communities.

We give thanks for our churches as gathered communities of people of Christian faith witnessing to the way of Jesus Christ. ~~~~~ PAUSE ~~~~~

God, in your mercy,

**All: Bring healing, bring peace.**

**Leader:** We confess that this diversity sometimes makes us feel uncomfortable, unsure and reluctant to meet with people of other faiths.

In the coming weeks, help us to be Christ-like in meeting those of other faith with openness, warmth, welcome and affirmation. ~~~~~ PAUSE ~~~~~

God, in your mercy,

**All: Bring healing, bring peace.**

**Leader:** If we have the opportunity to work alongside people of other faiths, help us to take it, for when we work alongside others, we come to know them.

Help us to be Christ-like, not only in what we say, but also in what we do. ~~~~~ PAUSE ~~~~~

God, in your mercy,

**All: Bring healing, bring peace.**

**Leader:** We pray for people of all faiths and none who have fled from their homes because of war and violent conflict.

We pray for those who have left their own country and who seek refuge and safety in other countries.

We pray for families who are homeless, or living in temporary camps. We pray for the nations who enjoy peace and security that their governments and people may respond with compassion, generosity and wisdom. ~~~~~ PAUSE ~~~~~

God, in your mercy,

**All: Bring healing, bring peace.**

In our listening, speaking and activities with people of other faiths, may we discover the joy and encouragement of similar approaches, understandings and practices and be ready, recognising great diversity, to accept that we may not always agree, but we can be friends.

~~~~~ PAUSE ~~~~~

God, in your mercy,

**All: Bring healing, bring peace.**

And let us sum up our prayers in the words that Jesus himself taught us:

**All: Our Father ...**

**Song:** 🎵

*(Known Unknown 38 – Fellow Travellers. Tune – O Waly, Waly)*

1. **Is God, who made and loves the earth, who gave each self and star its birth,  
convinced that Christians know it all? Or is that image much too small?**
2. **Did Jesus Christ, the faithful Jew, claim God was fond of just a few,  
content to serve a chosen race, and limit heaven’s warm embrace?**
3. **Did Christ not show immense respect, for those of a less favoured sect,  
enjoying, when the faith shone clear, the faithful other people fear?**
4. **Do we presume the Muslim mind, what Buddhists claim or Hindus find,  
Is purely human in design, detached from all that is divine?**
5. **God, bless the faith we call our own, each word we love, each seed you’ve sown;  
yet humble us till we believe, you are much more than we conceive.**
6. **Encourage us to look with care, on sacred gifts which others share –  
our fellow-travellers led by light, who walk by faith and not by sights.**

**Ending:**

**Leader:** On our hearts and our houses

**All:** **the blessing of God.**

**Leader:** In our coming and going

**All:** **the peace of God.**

**Leader:** In our life and believing

**All:** **the love of God.**

**Leader:** At our end and new beginning

**All:** **the arms of God to welcome us and bring us home. Amen.**

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**NEXT PERSHORE ABBEY IONA SERVICE IS  
at 5pm on SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**