

Iona Evening Prayers – March 2021 – Theme – Water

Welcome and Introduction

When I was thinking about putting this service together, I wanted to follow the theme of Soil from last month's service, by Water. I then realised 31st March was the day before Maundy Thursday, as we all know, one of the most important days in the Christian calendar when Jesus taught his disciples the lesson of humility, and used the simple act of washing their feet with water to do this.

It is so easy, in the West, to see water as a humble commodity; it is easy to take it for granted; yet it is more valuable than gold. Our bodies contain up to 60% water; every living thing on our planet needs moisture to some degree, without it we cannot live.

As I see it, water gives us physical life; Jesus gives us spiritual life.

Thought: People are spending astronomical amounts of money searching for water on Mars, when there are millions of people here on earth ill and dying because they do not have access to clean water.

Gathering Song (x 3)

**God welcomes all, strangers and friends,
God welcomes all, and it never ends.**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: May this time be good for us in body, mind and spirit,
for we gather in the presence of God,
who made us and loves us and will never leave us.

All: Amen

Prayer:

Leader: Lord, teach us the silence of humility.

All: the silence of wisdom

Leader: the silence of love

All: the silence that speaks without words

Leader: the silence of faith.

**All: Lord teach us to silence our own hearts and minds that we may listen for the movement
of your spirit within us, and treasure your presence in the depth of our being. Amen**

SILENCE

**Song: And did you know, that on the very night
on which you washed your own disciples' feet,
one whom you loved would leave the upstairs room
and scurry through the dark to price your head?**

**And did you know that those you trusted most,
who tried your patience and enjoyed your love,
who knew your fondest stories off by heart
would soon desert you in the dead of night?**

**And did you know that while it yet was dark
your fiercest enemies would rub their hands
and scoundrels who were game for any
bribe would lie and lie to seal your fate.**

**Did you know this when, with your healing hands,
you broke the bread and shared the cup of wine,
and feasted in the face of certain death
that we in this place may do so once again?**

**Then, Jesus, on your fearless faith we lean,
here let us taste the food and drink of heaven,
and in it own the brokenness we cause,
and through it know that all can be forgiven.**

Reading: Listen now for the word of God. (John 13: 1-16) For the word of the Lord,

All: thanks be to God.

Reflection:

Prayer:

Leader: God who created this blue-green planet, blessed with water –
springs, burns and rivers flowing down to the great ocean,
mist and rain helping the land to grow green-
we thank you for water, reflecting light, giving life.
God, who clothes our world with flowers of every colour and fragrance,
who gives the birds of the air berries and grain and grubs,
we thank you that we have food today and faith in tomorrow.

All: **Whenever we taste food or water
may we remember those who hunger and thirst;
and, as we are nourished, may we gain energy
to work for a greater sharing in your word. Amen**

Affirmation of Faith:

All: **We believe, O God of all Gods, that you are the eternal God of life. We believe, O God of all Gods, that you are the eternal God of love.**

Men: ***We believe, O God and maker of all creation, that you are the creator of the high heavens,
that you are the creator of the deep seas, that you are the creator of the stable earth.***

Women: **We believe O God of all peoples, that you created our souls and set their warp, that you created our bodies and gave them breath, that you made us in your own image.**

All: **We give you our worship with our whole lives; we give you our assent with our whole power. We give you our existence with our whole mind; we give you our kneeling with our whole desire.**

Song: O God, you are my God alone, whom eagerly I seek,
though longing fills my soul with thirst and leaves my body weak.
Just like a dry and barren land awaits a freshening shower,
I long within your house to see your glory and your power.

Your faithful love surpasses life, evoking all my praise.
Through every day, to bless your name, my hands in joy I'll raise.
My deepest needs you satisfy as with a sumptuous feast.
So, on my lips and in my heart, your praise has never ceased.

Throughout the night I lie in bed and call you, Lord, to mind;
in darkest hours I meditate how God my strength, is kind.
Beneath the shadow of your wing, I live and feel secure;
and daily, as I follow close, your right hand keeps me sure.

Prayers of Intercession:

Leader: God both knows us completely and loves us completely; meeting us where we are, he provides us with living water, to satisfy all our needs.

We pray for our world in all its richness and beauty; give us the desire to care and protect it from exploitation that it may be retained in all its variety for future generations.

PAUSE

All: **Living God, satisfy our thirst.**

We pray for the conflicting agendas of the world, for a longing for a deeper understanding of others' needs and a greater desire for justice, co-operation and peace between nations.

PAUSE

All: **Living God, satisfy our thirst.**

We pray for the poorest nations of the world struggling to survive war, famine and disease especially at this time of Covid, for a longing for a more equal sharing of resources.

PAUSE

All: **Living God, satisfy our thirst.**

We long for a less violent world; we pray for all victims of selfishness, violence and hate crime; and we pray for those who manipulate and take advantage of people less able or disadvantaged than themselves.

PAUSE

All: **Living God, satisfy our thirst.**

Living God, we pray for ourselves and those we love. We thirst for your Spirit of love which notices need, considers no job beneath itself, and delights in each person's gifts. Amen

Song: **Brother, Sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.**

**We are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road,
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.**

**I will hold the Christ light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.**

**I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen the journey through.**

**When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.**

**Brother Sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.**

Closing Responses:

Leader: **Christ has come to turn the world upside down:**

All: **To humble the powerful and lift up the lowly.**

Leader: **Christ has come to turn the tables:**

All: **to topple vain idols and stand with the poor.**

Leader: **Christ has come to proclaim God's Kingdom:**

Men: ***To feed the hungry***

Women: **to give sight to the blind**

Men: ***to strengthen the weary***

Women: **to set the prisoners free**

Leader: **Christ has come to turn the world upside down**

All: **to overthrow the present order with a revolution of love.**

Blessing:

**May the God who shakes heaven and earth, whom death could not contain, who lives to disturb
and heal us, bless us with power to go forth and proclaim the Gospel. Amen**

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ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE NEXT PERSHORE ABBEY IONA SERVICE AT 7.30PM ON WEDS 28TH APRIL