

Iona Evening prayers - Human Rights 7.30pm 26th May 2021

Welcome and Introduction:

Reading: 'Prayer with the World Church – Black Lives matter' by USPG:

On 25th May 2020, George Floyd died in the city of Minneapolis, USA, as a result of police brutality. His death was a shocking sight and news of his passing spread quickly. Alongside other victims of police brutality, such as Michael Brown Jr. Breonna Taylor and Trayvon Martin, Floyd's name has become a powerful symbol of the systemic injustice that people of colour face throughout their lives.

As Trayvon Martin's death in Florida in 2012 led to the formation of the Black Lives Matter movement, the killing of George Floyd resulted in the resurgence and the growth of Black Lives Matter. The summer of 2020 saw anti-racist protests worldwide, from the US and the UK to Japan and Brazil. These protests raised a huge amount of awareness of racism and the ways in which racism pervades society. They even led to changes in American law, particularly in police departments in major cities. However, there is still much work to be done to combat racism in all its forms around the world including the UK.

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.**

Opening Responses:

Leader: Just and merciful God, you speak through the prophets, challenging us to seek peace rooted in justice.

All: Help us to hear your urgent call.

Leader: Loving God, in Jesus you change our lives for good, challenging us to work for reconciliation.

All: Help us to see your way of truth and love.

Leader: With-us God, your Holy Spirit moves us to action, challenging us to live the Good News.

All: Help us to respond wholeheartedly, here and now – to say yes! Amen

Song: **We do not ask that heaven research the causes of our need;
We yearn to know that when we pray God listens and takes heed.

We do not ask to be exempt from grief or guilt or pain;
We deeply hope that suffering is not endured in vain.

For some face death or fear the dark, some fret for what might be;
And some, too ill to name their plight, still plead to be set free.

And some, in body or in mind bear scars that mark their past,
and long that stigmas be removed and truth be told at last.

Companion us, Lord Jesus Christ, to witness our distress.
In solidarity and love forgive, restore and bless.**

Prayer: Voice A: *Just and merciful God, we glimpse your presence in the world you have created,
Its power and its beauty, music and poetry, its diversity, fertility,
the possibility of food for everyone, the dream of fullness of life for all your children.
Yes, God, you are with us in this world.*

Voice B: Yet we see that power misused, beauty marred, discord and lies dividing humankind,
Failure to share, causing many to go hungry or die. Where are you God?

Voice A: *We hear the good news that Jesus brought, the affirmation of every human life,
The gospel that commands us to seek peace with justice,
We understand that costly reconciliation is at its heart.
Yes, God, you are with us in this world.*

Voice B: Yet we see that good news denied by apathy, mocked by prejudice, hatred and refusal
to forgive, and we feel helpless in the face of suffering. Where are you God?

All: **You are present where women and men of good will still choose to live in your way,
caring for creation and for each other, courageously speaking truth to power.
You are there when elderly people share their wisdom
You are there when street children dance in the rain.
You are present wherever, in this broken world, hope is alive.
Thank you God, for being present with us now. Amen**

Bible Reading: John 4 verses 1-13

Reading 2: 'In no-man's land' by Jan Sutch Pickard

Reading 3: 'Human Rights' by Tom Gordon

Reflection:

Affirmation of Faith:

**All: We believe in God
In whom is power and compassion.
We believe in the Creator, who gave birth to the universe,
Set solar systems dancing in space, shaped molecules and mountains,
and conceived beauty beyond our imagining.
God's power topples tyrants, and brings down walls of separation;
God's love embodies tenderness for a mother and father,
encouraging and caring for each of us.
We believe in Jesus, born in obscurity in an occupied land;
a human being, vulnerable to hunger and thirst, persecution and grief.
He understood the power of love and confronted the powers of evil,
spoke the truth with courage and clarity, forgave his enemies and changed lives.
In his living, dying and rising again he showed love strong enough to save the world.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, who sustains, comforts and empowers us,
Opens the scriptures, opens our minds, and illuminates earth's darkness. Amen**

Prayer: ALL: God, you know us.

You know that we can be loving and kind,
and you know that sometimes we get things wrong.

We are sorry for the times we hurt other people, forget to listen to you
and don't bother to care for your world.

God, forgive us. Jesus, bless us. God's Spirit, help us to grow in love.

Song: We bring our yearnings Lord of heart and soul and mind-

To see the patterns you inspire restored to humankind.

We yearn to see a time when war and conflicts cease,
When turmoil fuelled by race and creed is overcome by peace.

We yearn to know a world where seeds of justice flower,
Where burdens made by human greed no longer wield their power.

We yearn to find a ground where none need stand alone,
Where all are welcomed, valued, loved and know they've reached their home.

We yearn to feel at one with all who call your name
To breach the walls that separate and end division's pain.

Lord, take and use our lives, we offer them for this
That through our yearning and your power the earth will know heav'ns bliss.

Prayer:

Leader: We pray for our Brothers and Sisters around the world, people making a difference to the lives of others,
whatever their race or creed, and at this time we pray especially for the work of Christian Aid.

(PAUSE) God our Father,

ALL: LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Leader: We pray that Leaders and all people in authority will work together to search for ways to end division and
conflict. We pray for the end of greed and lust for power which destroys the lives of so many peoples.

(PAUSE) God our Father,

ALL: LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Leader: We pray for protection of endangered peoples, the natural world and the environment, the interweaving
of all species on this wonderful planet which is our common home.

(PAUSE) God our Father,

ALL: LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Leader: We pray that your law of unselfish love for one another should be the norm by which we all should live.

(PAUSE) God our Father,

ALL: LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Leader: We pray now for people in any form of trouble, mental or physical illness, sorrow, need or suffering of any
kind, and we think of those who feel alienated from their communities because of race or religion. Those
seeking refuge from war and natural disaster and economic oppression. (PAUSE) God our Father,

ALL: LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Leader: We pray for ourselves, that we may have the will and wisdom to be the answer to at least some of our prayers. (PAUSE) God our Father,

ALL: LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Song: All the wonder that surrounds us springs from God's care:
All that marvels or confounds us, raw, rich or rare;
Touch and texture, sights and voices, nature's countless forms and choices:
All for which the heart rejoices, springs from God's care.

Every creature, every human lives by God's grace:
Every family, man and woman, culture and race;
Those whom fortune seems to favour, those exploited for their labour,
Those who need to know a neighbour live by God's grace.

How can we revere God's goodness meant for all time?
How ensure that each uniqueness keeps in its prime?
How can we revere with pleasure all God gives for life and leisure?
How preserve each earthly treasure meant for all time?

God has willed that peace and justice walk hand in hand.
These, with love, shall build foundations on which we'll stand:
Love for lover, friend and stranger, love defying death and danger,
Love as first born in a manger – heaven close at hand.

Closing responses:

Leader: Because we are God's people

All: We will care for each other.

Because we are part of God's creation

We will be careful of the earth

Because we are part of God

We will share God's love with everyone.

**All: May the God of Peace inspire us, may the God of Justice empower us,
May the God of Hope encourage us to live the Good News.**

Leader: Let us go, in the power of the Spirit. Go, and do not try to separate politics and prayer.
Go, not to escape, but to engage with God's world. Go, to live hopefully, as people of resurrection.

All: Amen

NEXT PERSHORE ABBEY IONA WORSHIP – 7.30pm Wednesday 30th June