

# Stories and Prayers of Peace

IONA PRAYERS 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 7.30pm via Zoom

1

**CHANT:** 🎵 God welcomes all, strangers and friends; God's love is strong and it never ends.

## OPENING RESPONSES:

**Leader:** O God, who called all life into being,

**All:** **the earth, sea and sky are yours.**

**Leader:** Your presence is all around us;

**All:** **every atom is full of your energy.**

**Leader:** Your spirit enlivens all who walk the earth.

**All:** **With her we yearn for justice to be done, for creation to be free from threat,  
for the hungry to be fed, for captives to be released,  
for your kingdom of peace to come on earth.**

## WELCOME and INTRODUCTION:

### STORY 1: NEWS STORIES

**Reader 1:** The Iona Community has long taken a stand against weapons of mass destruction. In a recent statement, the leader, Ruth Harvey said:

*"It has been announced that the cap on the UK's nuclear stockpile will be increased by more than 40%. This marks the end of the gradual disarmament since the end of the Cold War, and would be a clear breach of our obligations under international law as signatories of the NPT (Nuclear non-proliferation treaty 1968) which committed us to no increase in our nuclear arsenal.*

*Instead, we call on the government to invest in global security by contributing to constructive and cooperative programmes to achieve greater justice and peace, particularly in post-pandemic times.*

*This news comes shortly after the government announced the cutting of the UK's aid budget from 0.75% to 0.55% of national income (on grounds of unaffordability)."*

## SONG: 🎵

1. O Lord, the clouds are gathering, the fire of judgement burns.  
How we have fallen! O Lord, you stand appalled to see  
your laws of love so scorned, and lives so broken.
2. Lord, over the nations now, where is the dove of peace?  
Her wings are broken. O Lord, while precious children starve,  
the tools of war increase, their bread is stolen.
3. Lord, dark powers are poised to flood, our streets with hate and fear.  
We must awaken! O Lord, let love reclaim the lives  
that sin would sweep away, and let your kingdom come!

**Leader:** The stories we hear and tell, affect how we see ourselves and others. They affect our view of the world and our choice of paths, which lead us towards peace or conflict. During the reading of the poem prayer *The Shadow of the Dove*, let yourself imagine situations where the Holy Spirit of love, longs to bring healing and peace. You may wish to light a candle during the reading.

**Reader 1:** **The shadow of the dove - a prayer poem, by KATE MCILHAGGA**

**STORY 2: LEARNING FROM STORY**

**Reader 2:** Listen now for the word of God. (*Luke 15 v11-32 The parable of the lost son*)

**Reader 2:** For the word of God in scripture,

**All:** for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us, thanks be to God. Amen

**STORY 3: TELLING AND LISTENING TO STORY**

**SONG:** 🎵

1. **When the wheel of fate is turning, and the mills of God grind slow,  
when the past seems more attractive, than the future we don't know,  
when our confidence is waning, and we lack security,  
comes the timeless word of Jesus, that the truth will set us free.**
  2. **Is it war or economics, is it danger or deceit,  
is it unforeseen depression, fear of failure to compete?  
Have the times which once were changing, led where no one wants to be?  
Shall we live by lies on offer, or the truth that sets us free?**
3. **With real faith there will be doubting, and with loss there will be grief.  
No one knows the contradiction, which will exercise belief.  
Against conflicts life might bring us, God provides no guarantee,  
just this word of hope and healing: know that truth will set you free.**
  4. **So, dear Jesus, make us willing, to unmask convenient lies,  
to protest wherever power, closes conscience, ears or eyes;  
and release our expectations, of your kingdom yet to be,  
born in courage, joy and justice, and the truth that sets us free.**

**Reader 3:** *South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

**SONG:** 🎵

1. Help us to accept the past; its pleasure, pride and pain,  
the promises fulfilled, and vows we made in vain,  
the hidden depths we rarely knew, the brokenness through which we grew.
  2. Help us to redeem the past, and help us to forgive  
ourselves and all the hurt, we're tempted to relive,  
the ones who nursed adversity, or scored our fallibility.
3. Help us to leave the past, yet not to close the door,  
to live with our regrets, but seek revenge no more.  
Let memories be trouble-free, and dreams discover liberty.

**STORY 4: BEING CHANGED BY STORY / CHANGING THE STORY**

**Leader:** All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.  
The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,  
(PAUSE) Father forgive.

**All:** **FATHER FORGIVE**

**Leader:** Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**All:** **AMEN**

**SONG:** 

1. Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain,  
informed of God's own bias, we ask him once again:  
'How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?  
How long dare vain self interest, turn prayer and pity blind.
2. From those forever victims, of heartless human greed,  
their cruel plight composes, a litany of need:  
'Where are the fruits of justice? Where are the signs of peace?  
When is the day when prisoners, and dreams find their release?'

3. God asks, 'Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?  
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?  
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?  
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?'
4. Amused in someone's kitchen, asleep in someone's boat,  
attuned to what the ancients, exposed proclaimed and wrote,  
a saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools  
has come to tip the balance, with fishermen and fools.

**PRAYER OF COMMITMENT:** *(from 'Together for Hope' – sister project to the Community of Nails)*

**Leader:** For love, which heals wounds,  
**All:** **we will stand.**

Leader: For generosity, which opens space for hope,  
**All:** **we will stand.**

Leader: For nurturing, which builds a culture of peace,  
**All:** **we will stand.**

Leader: For compassion, which seeks the best for all,  
**All:** **we will stand.**

Leader: For respect, which enables us to love with difference,  
**All:** **we will stand.**

Leader: For humility, which allows healthy relationships with others,  
**All:** **we will stand.**

Leader: Together for hope,  
**All:** **we will stand. Amen**

**BLESSING:**

Leader: May God write a message upon your heart, bless and direct you,  
then send you out, living letters of the Word.

**All:** **Amen**

©Iona Community

©W.G.R.G.

©Pershore Abbey Licence No. 44611

<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/wpsite/litany-of-reconciliation/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CovTforH/> 'Together for Hope' - secular & faith based sister project to the Community of Nails

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-04-06/south-africas-imperfect-progress-20-years-after-truth-reconciliation-commission>

**NEXT IONA SERVICE – 27<sup>TH</sup> MAY 7.30PM**