

# Pershore Abbey Iona Service - Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 5pm

## A service of quiet reflection before the election

**Welcome and Introduction:** As the election draws nearer, this service provides an opportunity for quiet reflection and prayer away from the noise of media politics. We will have two periods of silence and stillness. Rather than focussing on God as beyond or above us, we turn our attention to God who dwells within each of us. Spending time with God in quiet is not an escape from the troubles of the world, for the God we encounter is also at the heart of the world's life and struggles.

**Gathering Song:** 🎵 **God welcomes all, strangers and friends.**

**God's love is strong and it never ends. ( X 3 )**

### **Opening responses:**

**Leader:** In the beginning, when it was very dark, God said, 'Let there be light.'

**All:** **And there was light.** *(a candle is lit)*

**Leader:** In the beginning, when it was very quiet, the Word was with God.

**All:** **And what God was, the Word was.** *(a bible is placed centrally)*

**Leader:** When the time was right, God sent the Son.

**All:** **He came among us; he was one of us.** *(a cross is placed centrally)*

**Song:** 🎵 *(Tune Slane)*

- 1. God beyond knowledge, yet close to us here,  
our touchstone, our lodestar in faith and in fear;  
your presence we know in the dark before dawn  
as courage is kindled and hope is reborn.**
- 2. God without limits, yet sharing our flesh,  
you speak for the silenced, release the oppressed  
and call us to follow, in all things to prove  
the tools of your spirit, the signs of your love.**
- 3. Lord, to your purpose our living we pledge:  
to go beyond comfort and stand at life's edge,  
to love and to live without safety, and so  
to shape and inhabit your Kingdom of hope.**

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** Jesus, you commanded waves to be still and calmed the stormy sea. Quieten now our restless hearts that they may find rest in you.

We take a step back from the jostling and partisan talk around us.

We recognise the concerns and conflict of interests inside us.

We seek to feel your presence and your path in the midst of all that might distract us.

So, now we surrender for these moments, our speech, knowing that beneath the silence is a deeper Word, and that even when we say nothing, you are listening.

Ever listening, ever watchful, ever loving God, we rest in you.

**All: Ever listening, ever watchful, ever loving God, we rest in you.**

**First Time of Quiet:** *(A time for prayer and quiet reflection.)*

**The Lord's Prayer:** *(Please join in with which ever version you are familiar.)*

**Reading:** *(Matthew 5 verses 1 – 16 The Beatitudes)*

**Reader:** Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them. He said:

<sup>3</sup> 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**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.**

**Song:** ♪ (*Paraphrase of Psalm 37*) (*Tune St Anne – O God our help in ages past*)

1. **Do not be vexed or envy those, obsessed with doing wrong.  
Their fortune is like fields of grass, whose growth cannot last long.**
2. **Trust in the Lord, do what is right, take root in God's good ground.  
Delight in God in whose great will, your heart's desire is found.**
3. **Give God your trust, and let the Lord, direct your future way.  
The justice of your cause shall rise and shine as clear as day.**
4. **Do not be jealous or dismayed, should evil folk succeed.  
Wait patiently for God who comes, in quietness to your need.**

**Second Time of Quiet:** (*You may wish to write your thoughts and prayers on paper.*)

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** For the quiet of the evening, we give you thanks.  
For listening to our questions, we give you thanks.  
For hearing our cries, we give you thanks.  
For challenging and redirecting us, we give you thanks.  
For loving and accepting us, we give you thanks.

**All:** Amen

**Song:** ♪

**Chorus:** *The God of heaven is present on Earth, in word and silence and sharing,  
in face of doubt, in depth of faith, in signs of love and caring.*

1. **Gentler than air, wilder than wind, settling yet also deranging,  
the Spirit thrives in human lives, both changeless and yet changing. (Chorus)**
2. **Far from the church, outside the fold, where prayer turns feeble and  
nervous,  
the Spirit wills society's ills, be healed through humble service. (Chorus)**
3. **From rural quiet to urban riot, in every social confusion,  
the Spirit pleads for all that leads, to freedom from illusion. (Chorus)**
4. **Truth after tears, trust after fears, God leaving everyone wiser,  
the Spirit springs through hopeless things, transforming what defies her.  
(Chorus)**

**Blessing:**

**Leader:** May you be out of your depth – as the deeps of the night sky contain but cannot explain God’s mystery.

May you be in the dark – as the moon is eclipsed, but held safe, with all that is, in the palm of God’s hand.

May you be lost for words – as the Word is spoken in the silence of the night, in the beauty of God’s creation.

The loving blessing of God, Creator, Healer, and Holy Spirit, be in us and around us tonight, tomorrow, and all our nights and days.

**All: Amen**

**The Grace:**

**All: May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all,  
this night and always. Amen**

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**NEXT IONA SERVICE is at 5pm on SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024**

*(There is no Iona service in August)*