

AN AGAPE - Iona Abbey, 16 August 2007

Welcome

Opening Responses

Leader Out of the darkness came light;
ALL AND THE POWER OF GOD WAS REVEALED
Men in the running wave and the radio wave,
Women in the electric spark and the shining stars.

Leader Out of the dust came life;
ALL AND THE IMAGE OF GOD WAS REVEALED
Men in the human face and the gentle heart,
Women in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul.

Leader Out of justice came freedom;
ALL AND THE WISDOM OF GOD WAS REVEALED
Men in the need to grow and the will to love,
Women in the chance to know and the power to choose.

Leader And God looked at the creation,
ALL AND BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD.

Song 169 Praise the Lord with the sound of a trumpet

Prayers of Adoration

Leader We will keep on thanking God with constant words of prayer.
 We will glory in the living God:
 the humble will hear and be glad.
 Let us pray.

Reader Living God, our loving parent: you cherish your creation and we
 praise you.
 With earth, air, water, fire: in our element as your children, we
 praise you.
 With our lips, with our lives,
 in all our diversity, each one made in your image, we praise you.
 Because you share our human lives,
 our sorrow and joy, we praise you.

Because you are at work today: encouraging, enabling, surprising us,
in the world's places of beauty and of pain, in the mystery of the mundane, we praise you.
Poor as we are, you give us hope:
salt of the earth, you give us meaning and purpose and we praise you.

ALL AMEN

Prayer of Confession

Reader Our praise fills us with a sense
of God's goodness - beside our struggle to be good,
and of our weakness beside God's great strength.
But God's grace meets us now
to renew us, reorientate us, restore us.
And so in confidence we pray.

ALL We call on the power of God to meet us in our helplessness:
GOD IN OUR THINKING, GOD IN OUR SPEAKING.

Leader We call on the clarity of God to meet us in our confusion:
ALL GOD IN OUR ACTING, GOD IN OUR STILLNESS.

Leader We call on the mercy of God to meet us in our brokenness:
ALL GOD IN OUR WAKING, GOD IN OUR SLEEPING.

Leader We call on the Spirit of God to meet us in our division:
ALL GOD IN OUR MEETING, GOD IN OUR PARTING.

A sign of peace

Leader And now we call on the grace of God
to meet us here as we share a peace with each other.

(We sing, and share a sign of peace with each other)

Reading Genesis 28.10-19 Jacob's Luz becomes Jacob's Bethel

Reflection

Giving thanks for the week

(After sharing a chant you are invited to call out single words or brief phrases of thanks for the week.)

Introduction to the sharing

Leader We have shared peace,
 we have shared thanksgiving,
 and we now in solidarity and *agape*
 share ordinary bread and ordinary water together

(Bread is broken)

The sharing

Leader Taste and see that God is good.

(Bread and water are passed around from one person to another.)

Prayer after sharing

Leader With gratefulness to each other for all that we have shared
 and thankfulness to God and all the people who have brought this
 good food and water to us,
 we begin to look outwards and ahead
 to our lives beyond this week and this place, so let us pray:

Reader Dear God, we give thanks for places of simplicity and peace
ALL LET US FIND SUCH A PLACE WITHIN OURSELVES.

Reader We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty
ALL LET US FIND SUCH A PLACE WITHIN OURSELVES.

Reader We give thanks for places of truth and freedom,
 of joy, inspiration and renewal,
 places where all creatures may find acceptance and belonging.
ALL LET US SEARCH FOR THESE PLACES:
 IN THE WORLD, IN OURSELVES AND OTHERS.
 LET US RESTORE THEM.
 LET US STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT THEM
 AND LET US CREATE THEM.

Reader May we mend this outer world
 according to the truth of our inner life
 and may our souls be shaped and nourished by nature's eternal
 wisdom,
 in the country, in the city, and in every place we go.

ALL AMEN *adapted from Michael Leunig, A Common Prayer, © 1997 Lion Publishing*

Song 183 Fill now our life, O Lord our God

Closing Responses

Leader O God of life, of all life and of each life,
 we lay our lives before you;
 we give our lives to you
 from whom nothing is hidden.

Women You are before us, O God, you are behind.
Men You are around us, O God, you are within.

Leader O God of life, O generous Spirit,
ALL RENEW US WITH YOUR LIFE,
 TONIGHT, TOMORROW AND ALWAYS.
 AMEN

Blessing

Leader Giving God, bless all who have gathered around this table.
 May we know the fullness of your presence
 at every meal and in all our sharing.
ALL AMEN

Closing Song

*Behold, behold I make all things new,
beginning with you
and starting from today.
Behold, behold I make all things new,
my promise is true
for I am Christ the Way.*

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