

Peace and Quiet in Troubled Times March 2026

Welcome to this opportunity to give yourself time and space away from the daily tasks, worries and fears which put our minds in turmoil. You are invited to focus on the music, words and pictures. You may find it helpful to read the poems out loud and then to keep silences in between, entering into an oasis of calm, to engage in 'mindfulness'. Each month we explore a different theme, relevant to our common experiences of life and the world around us. We follow the pattern of the seasons of the Church year.

Please click on the underlined text beneath the images to hear the music via YouTube. Please do skip any adverts that appear.

Journeying through Lent



During Lent, we accompany Jesus into the desert; we face the wilderness of our own inner landscape to prepare ourselves for the Easter journey of death and resurrection. We have the opportunity to explore the inner geography of our lives for areas of dead wood, thorns or tangled knots. Twisted relationships, the dead wood of old hurts and habits, the confusion that sometimes comes when we feel we can't see the wood for the trees - all these are wilderness areas, and they need to be cleared away before growth and new life is possible. Or perhaps there are desert patches - arid, dry areas where nothing can grow or blossom, parts of us which have almost withered away from not being used or tended or tested - some tenderness, some care, some talent, some forgiveness, some humour - that need the water of life to bring them bursting into flower.

Kathy Galloway



<https://youtu.be/IX1zicNRLmY>

Allegrì Miserere Mei
Have mercy on me O God - Psalm 51

Lent

Lent is a tree without blossom, without leaf,
Barer than blackthorn in its winter sleep,
All unadorned. Unlike Christmas which decrees
The setting-up, the dressing-up of trees,
Lent is a taking down, a stripping bare,
A starkness after all has been withdrawn
Of surplus and superfluous,
Leaving no hiding-place, only an emptiness
Between black branches, a most precious space
Before the leaf, before the time of flowers;
Lest we should see only the leaf, the flower,
Lest we should miss the stars.

Jean M. Watt



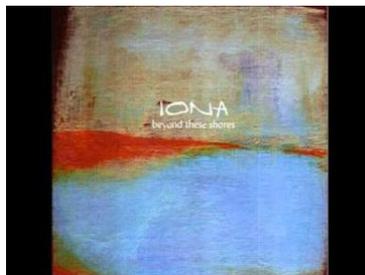


The moor

It was like a church to me.
I entered it on soft foot,
Breath held like a cap in the hand.
It was quiet.
What God was there made himself felt,
Not listened to, in clean colours
That brought a moistening of the eye,
In movement of the wind over grass.

There were no prayers said. But stillness
Of the heart's passions - that was praise
Enough; and the mind's cession
Of its kingdom. I walked on,
Simple and poor, while the air crumbled
And broke on me generously as bread.

R.S Thomas



Machrie Moor – IONA

<https://youtu.be/wPwGA8r3dB0>

Lent

Lent is a time to learn to travel
Light, to clear the clutter
From our crowded lives, and
Find a space, a desert.
Deserts are bleak: no creature
Comforts, only a vast expanse of
Stillness, sharpening awareness of
Ourselves and God.

Uncomfortable places, deserts.

Most of the time we're tempted to
Avoid them, finding good reasons to
Live lives of ease; cushioned by
Noise from self-discovery,
Clutching at world's success
To stave off fear.

But if we dare to trust the silence
To strip away our false security,
God can begin to grow his wholeness in us,
Fill up our emptiness, destroy our fears,
Give us new vision, courage for the journey,
And make our desert blossom like a rose.

Ann Lewin - Watching for the Kingfisher



<https://youtu.be/ZuEuFoPnh9o>

Sound of Silence – Milos

Prayer 'For times of dryness'

We ask your blessing mother God
on our times of dryness,
when the well of living water
seeps into barren land.

Help us to be, to listen in the waiting
for the still small voice
which speaks of promises unbroken
beneath our doubt and fear and forgetting.

And when the river returns to us, Creator God
teach us to praise the bounty of water,
to use its succour well, to succour others,
flowing with the love which comes from you.

Quoted in 'Resources for Preaching and Worship year C'
Comp. Hannah Ward and Jennifer wild

The Well

I found a well once
In the dark green heart of a wood

Where pigeons ruffled up into a skylight of
branches
And disappeared.

The well was old, so mossed and broken
It was almost a part of the wood

Gone back to nature, Carefully, almost fearfully,
I looked down into its depths

And saw the lip of water shifting and tilting
Heard the music of dripping stones.



I stretched down, cupped a deep handful
Out of the winter darkness of its world

And drank. That water tasted of moss, of
secrets,
Of ancient meetings, of laughter,

Of dark stone, of crystal -
It reached the roots of my being

Assuaged a whole summer of thirst.
I have been wandering for that water ever since.

Kenneth Steven - IONA Poems



https://youtu.be/w_z9oSn-eIM

Schubert : Impromptu in G flat Op. 90 No.3

Waiting for the ambush

Everything about us reaches out to be loved and to love. Astonishingly, we are already encompassed by God's love - but we will not, dare not or cannot believe it. We risk staying stuck too long in the trappings of routine religion. Beyond our familiar 'to do' lists for Lent - the things to give up, the tasks to take on, the prayers to squeeze in, the sins to cut out - there is a deeper horizon drawing us closer into a beautiful mystery. The surrender to divine love is only blocked by our own futile efforts to improve, to get better, to save our souls.

We wait for that blessed season in our lives when we empty ourselves of all that distorts the whisper of divine longing within us. All we are asked to do is to stay ready and obedient to God's fingers and lips, making new music on the silent reeds of our hearts. This astounds us. We had been told differently. The

emptier we become, the more space for God to fill. The more hollow we are, the truer the music from the lips of the Flautist. In 'May I have this Dance?' Joyce Rupp has caught the meaning:

The small wooden flute and I,
We need the one who breathes...
So that the song-starved world
May be fed with golden melodies.

At some point during one special Lent, the veils will part just enough to transfix our hearts and transform our lives. That intimate moment will happen when the divine breath blows beauty into our shape, into our face and form. Everything is affected because everything is connected. The song of Creation itself is muted when the reeds of our lives are no longer receptive to the breath of God.

'Lord only let me make my life simple and straight' wrote Rabindranath Tagore, 'like a flute of reeds for Thee to fill with music.'

Daniel J. O'Leary - Unmasking God



<https://youtu.be/OhifFpe-HHo>

Mabon Music

Prayer 'Pilgrim God'

Pilgrim God, bless us with
courage,
where our way is fraught
with danger.
Bless us with good
companions,
where the way demands a
common cause.
Bless us with good
humour,
for we cannot travel lightly

when weighed down with
over-much solemnity.
Bless us with humility
to learn from those around
us.
Bless us with decisiveness,
when we have to move quickly.
Bless our lazy moments,
when we need to stretch
our limbs for the journey.
Bless us, lead us, love us
and bring us home.
bearing the gospel of life. Amen.



<https://youtu.be/pN4tPkX0MG0>

The Lord's my Shepherd – Stuart Townsend

The Bright Field

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it. I realise now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it.

Life is not hurrying



on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

R.S Thomas



Edvard Grieg – The Last Spring

<https://youtu.be/nY3DnoKMOFo>