

MEDITATION

Iona

Meditation: A form of Christian prayer in which a person seeks to pass beyond mental images and concepts to a direct experience of the divine.

Pilgrimage: A sacred journey with a spiritual purpose.

In setting off on this journey, I did carry the knowledge of those words and also the expectation of adventure, looking forward to experiencing a new place and in the company of others who shared those intentions.

I believe the spirit of pilgrimage is 'to be drawn into something more'.

(The Cloud Of Unknowing)

So, recently, I find myself reflecting on this trip together, as I prepare for meditation.

As Dorothy (fellow pilgrim), described (August 3rd), we were amazed by wonderful weather and awed by the beauty of the island and all that surrounded it.

This poem, believed to have been written by St. Columba, as he brought Christianity to Iona, describes his delight in his life of sorrow and of praise:

*That I might bless the Lord
Who conserves all-
Heaven with its countless bright orders,
Land, strand and flood,
That I might search the books all
That would be good for any soul;
At times kneeling to beloved heaven
At times psalm-singing;
At times contemplating the King of Heaven,
Holy Chief;
At times at work without compulsion,
This would be delightful;
At times picking kelp from the rocks
At times fishing
At times giving food to the poor
At times in a carcair (solitary cell)*

We relaxed in comfort and began to share all of this lovely experience together.

We ate, explored, and swam together and in groups. We worshipped at the Abbey, with The Ionian Community, volunteers and visitors.

The anonymous writer of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, explains the need to ‘deconstruct the old knowledge’, in order to be open to the new. Certainly, sharing the liturgy the community has developed, was a complete refreshment, in worship, for me. It introduced a glorious accessibility, through simple and beautiful language. I had had no preconception about this form of worship and it was deeply, spiritually, cleansing.

It was unexpected and welcome. These lovely phrases are the invitation to Communion.

We are here because Jesus has called us....

So come,

*not because you understand,
but because you are understood.*

Come,

*not because of how you feel,
but because God has food for you.*

Come,

*not because you deserve a place,
but because Jesus invites you,
just as you are.*

In all the worship I experienced value, truth and longing. The exploration of Iona and beyond gave me the opportunity to reflect on these things, to dwell in the perfection of his creation and to breath his peace.

*‘ Not an easy peace,
not a conditional peace,
not a half hearted peace,
but the peace of Christ.....’*

The Ionian Liturgy

Our time, listening to one another other and talking, with intent, was rewarded with a growing sense of community. The real value of listening and speaking, the shared love and acceptance, will continue for me as core components of community life. This experience overcoming preconceptions, ‘silencing our analytical minds, freeing our hearts to love’
(The Cloud of Unknowing)

On this pilgrimage, I have been deeply refreshed and brought nearer to God. I am thankful for a reawakening of the need for Intentional Talk _ (Speaking and listening), a loving and growing sense of community and simple forms of communication that leads to greater understanding. Above all simply, to find a place. A space in which to recognise the need to reconnect with God.

‘You only need naked intent for God. When you long for him, that’s enough’
For these gifts of understanding, I give praise and thanks.

*‘As the deer longs for streams of cool water,
so my heart longs for you, O God,’ Psalm 42*