



‘Something Understood’
A Short Liturgy for the Feast of the Visitation

REACHING OUT

(You could, if you wish, light a candle with each invocation)

God
who has encompassed
all time,
be present now;

Jesus
who was enfolded
in the womb of time
be present now;

Spirit
who still entangles
our time with God's time
be present now;

so may this time
be held by love
and hallowed
with grace.
Amen.

you are invited to keep a short time of silence

RECOGNITION and RESHAPING

Jesus
You are still
coming into the world -
spoken through small beginnings
and in unlikely places,
and calling us to be both bearers
and witnesses
to that word of Life.

where I have not always recognised you
with the intuitive joy of Elizabeth
forgive me
and enlighten my seeing;

where I have not always welcomed you
with the vigorous joy of John
forgive me
and enlarge my heart;

where I have not always spoken you
with the explosive joy of Mary
forgive me
and energise my voice

that I too
may know
embrace
and bear witness
to Life in all its fullness.
Amen.

READING: LUKE 1: 39-56

REFLECTION: [‘Visitation’ by Jacopo Carucci Pontormo](#)

A reflective art video podcast on Pontormo’s painting from
Dr Debbie Lewer of the University of Glasgow
(to start the podcast, click on the title above)

RESPONSE

Jesus - hidden and yet known -
for those who recognised you
joy would also, in time,
be joined by sorrow.

Keep me steady
through joy and sorrow,
faithfully holding
to the larger view
of what will unfold
through your presence in the world.
So shall I too be part of its realisation
until the time
when all sorrow is healed
in the joy of your Kingdom.
Amen.

REORIENTATION

As I move again into time
keep me attentive
to the voice of your Spirit
that I might see and know you
wherever you are coming into the world;

and through that recognition
may revelation and rejoicing
lead
to a re-imagining
and remaking
of the world
as you intend it to be.
Amen.

*Liturgy © Pat Bennett
The Iona Community*

This liturgy and podcast were prepared in partnership with St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow and with Dr Debbie Lewer, Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Glasgow. It is part of a series entitled 'Bodies in Transition', and two further podcasts and liturgies - for the feasts of Corpus Christi and the Transfiguration - will be released on 11th June and 6th August respectively. You can download a transcript of today's podcast [here](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you would like to sing as part of this liturgy, 'Sing out my Soul' by John L. Bell and Graham Maule (from the book/CD 'Love and Anger') or 'Tell Out My Soul' by Timothy Dudley-Smith are two contemporary renditions of the Magnificat.

Sing out my soul

Sing out my soul sing with joy to the Lord;
sing of the greatness and goodness of God,
loving the lowly who trust in his word. Alleluia.

Sing out my soul let your faith be confessed;
those yet unborn will declare how I'm blessed.
To God's great bias I gladly attest. Alleluia.

God's name is holy, God's mercy is sure;
and through all ages God's love will endure,
firing the hearts and the faith of the pure. Alleluia.

God forces ruler to forfeit the throne;
lifting the unloved, the lost and alone,
God shows that favour reserved for his own. Alleluia.

Those who are hungry God fills with good things,
those who are rich into poverty brings;
pregnant with justice my heart gladly sings Alleluia.

God who is faithful has come to our aid,
never forgetting the promise he made.
Each generation sees mercy displayed. Alleluia.

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(If you don't know the tune, you can hear several verses [here](#) at track 12)

The Visitation - a sonnet by Malcolm Guite

Here is a meeting made of hidden joys
Of lightnings cloistered in a narrow place
From quiet hearts the sudden flame of praise
And in the womb the quickening kick of grace.
Two women on the very edge of things
Unnoticed and unknown to men of power
But in their flesh the hidden Spirit sings
And in their lives the buds of blessing flower.
And Mary stands with all we call 'too young',
Elizabeth with all called 'past their prime'
They sing today for all the great unsung
Women who turned eternity to time
Favoured of heaven, outcast on the earth
Prophets who bring the best in us to birth.

Malcolm is a priest and poet and chaplain of Girton College Cambridge. This sonnet is from his collection Sounding the Seasons, published by Canterbury Press. Malcolm very generously gives free permission for his sonnets to be copied and shared. You can read more of his work on his Blog



Inspired by our faith, we pursue justice and peace in and through community

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