

Prayer Vigil at the Home Office for Victims of Global Migration November 2023

Leader invites a few moments of silence and contemplation before the 'barbed wire icon'.

Opening Prayers

All **We pray for those who will spend time during our service handing out leaflets to the public. We ask that our message will reach the hearts of people of good will on this street today. Amen.**

Leader Creator Spirit, wellspring of our lives, as the refreshing rain falls on the just and unjust alike,

All **Refresh us with your mercy, you who know our own injustice.**

Leader As the stream flows steadily on, defying all the odds of stone and water,

All **Flow over every boundary and border that separates us from each other.**

Leader As the waters of our baptism washed us and welcomed us,

All **Renew us now in newness of life and unity of love.**

Hymn – Beauty for Brokenness

Beauty for brokenness,
Hope for despair,
Lord, in the suffering
This is our prayer:
Bread for the children,
Justice, joy, peace;
Sunrise to sunset,
Your kingdom increase!

Refuge from cruel wars,
Havens from fear,
Cities for sanctuary,
Freedoms to share;
Peace to the killing-fields,
Scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
His cross for the pain.

Shelter for fragile lives,
Cures for their ills,
Work for the craftsman,
Trade for their skills;
Land for the dispossessed,
Rights for the weak,
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak.

Rest for the ravaged earth,
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned-
Our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
Carelessness, greed;
Make us content with
The things that we need. **(Chorus)**

(Chorus:) *God of the poor,
Friend of the weak,
Give us compassion we pray:
Melt our cold hearts,
Let tears fall like rain;
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame.*

Lighten our darkness,
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice
Burns brightly again;
Until the nations
Learn of your ways,
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise. **(Chorus)**

Psalm 118

A I am seized with indignation at the wicked who forsake your law.
Though the nets of the wicked ensnared me
I remembered your law.

B Redeem me from man's oppression
and I will keep your precepts.
Those who harm me unjustly draw near;
they are far from your law.

A Salvation is far from the wicked
who are heedless of your statutes.
I look at the faithless with disgust;
they ignore your promise.

Prayers of Repentance

Leader: Loving Jesus, as a child, and in fear of your life, you were forced to seek refuge in Egypt. You know what it is like to be rejected, and to be an outsider. You call us to love our neighbours as ourselves, but we have hardened our hearts against strangers.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

Leader: You told us not to judge, yet we listen to rumours and fail to check facts. We hear what is best for us and not what is good for those in need.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

Leader: You said we must welcome everyone, those speaking different languages and with different beliefs and cultures, but we have turned our backs on opportunities to widen our experience. We have shut out foreigners from our communities.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

Leader: Today we are called more than ever to welcome those fleeing from war. Open our hearts, and those of our neighbourhood, of our city, of our country and of our continent, to those who need our shelter.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

The List of Names

The names or details which follow are those of people who have died trying to obtain sanctuary in Europe or the UK. We read them so as to honour their lives and mourn the injustice of their deaths. Many are unknown, but as Pope Francis said, 'Every one has a name, a face and a story'. Today we mark those who died in November 2022.

After each entry, *Leader* says: Lord have mercy.

All respond: **Christ, have mercy.**

Date	Details
1/11	1 Palestinian drowned when a dinghy capsized off island of Samos, his body recovered after 2 days search; 4 rescued
1/11	54 including 5 children from Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere drowned when their boat sank in bad weather off Evria. 26 bodies were found, 12 people survived.
2/11	1 drowned, when a boat from Turkey sank off island of Evia; body recovered by patrol boat; 12 rescued
2/11	5 from Bangladesh drowned off Al Magroun, Libya. Bodies never found. 12 rescued.
3/11	10 Algerians drowned off Cabo de Gata, Spain. 3 survivors rescued from the water. 1 body found.

6/11	1 young man from Afghanistan, his body found attached to a boat at banks of Sava River in Trstenci, Bosnia and Herzegovina, near Hungarian border
7/11	Ahmed Safi, 19, from Afghanistan, hit by a lorry walking along side of a highway near Ventimiglia, Italy, on way to French border.
8/11	6 Tunisians drowned when the boat's engine failed on way from Sidi al-Bashir, Tunisia, to Italy. 6 were rescued, 4 swam to shore.
9/11	6 Tunisians drowned when their boat sank off Bizerte, Tunisia, on way to Italy. 2 bodies recovered. 10 rescued.
9/11	13 people, including 1 child, drowned on way from Africa to Europe.
9/11	6 Guineans drowned or froze to death on way from Libya to Italy after 36 hours on the sea. One, Joseph, a boy of 6 months, died of hypothermia on a rescue ship.
9/11	One woman died of hypothermia in hospital on island of Lampedusa, Italy, after rescue in Mediterranean sea
9/11	Godan Raim Bahie, a boy 21 days old, from Ivory Coast, died of hypothermia in a boat off Lampedusa, Italy. His family was taking him to Italy so he could be treated for a medical issue.
10/11	2 people found burned on a boat from Sfax, Tunisia, during rescue off Lampedusa. 36 rescued.
10/11	3 children, 2 of whom were twins, from sub-Saharan Africa, drowned off Chebba, Tunisia, when a coast guard boat rammed the boat carrying them. The Tunisian Coast Guard receives funding from the European Union.
10/11	1 person drowned off island of Evia, Greece, when a boat sank. Their body was found washed up on an Evian beach. 12 rescued.
11/11	4 people from Sub-Saharan Africa presumed drowned, their bodies recovered from coast of Chebba, Tunisia.
12/11	1 person died of unknown causes on a boat on its way from Africa to Lampedusa. 31 rescued.
14/11	Rital, a 3-year-old girl from Syria, died in an asylum seekers' centre in Schalkhaar, Netherlands, after being denied medical care. She had epilepsy She is survived by a twin brother.
14/11	6 people drowned shortly after their inflatable boat sank shortly after departing Tunisia for Europe. 2 bodies never found. 10 rescued.
14/11	1 person died from suicide, found hanging from a tree in M'diq-Fnideq Prefecture, Morocco, near Spanish enclave of Ceuta.
14/11	7 young men from Algeria, one named Rami Lousahi, presumed drowned between Ben Zwit Beach, Algeria, and Italy. 7 rescued.
17/11	1 man died of unknown causes on the Belarus-Lithuania border after a push-back from Lithuania.
19/11	6 drowned when small boat got into trouble in bad weather between Algeria and Italy. 2 bodies never found. 7 rescued.
25/11	Issaka Coulibaly, a man of 27 from Côte d'Ivoire, died of circulation failure, having suffered angina, sleeping rough in Milan, Italy. He had been a goalkeeper in an Italian refugee football team.
30/11	Alireza Rahimi, a boy of 17 from Afghanistan, died of suicide in a shelter for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in Geneva, Switzerland, in fear of deportation.

All: Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Hymn – “Jesus, Remember Me”

Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom. **(x3)**

Reading

(Matthew 25:31-46) Jesus said to his disciples: ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

‘Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.” Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and gave you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?” And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”

‘Next he will say to those on his left hand, “Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me.” Then it will be their turn to ask, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?” Then he will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.”

‘And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.’

Reflection

Prayers of Intercession

*Everyone present reads in turn. All say the **response** in bold.*

We pray for the thousands of men, women and children, known and unknown, who set out to seek safety and a better life in Europe, but who were drowned in the Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea or the English Channel. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for migrants who have met hostility or violence from authorities or vigilantes. We pray for those pushed back into the sea, and those forced into the desert. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for all those seeking sanctuary in the UK who depend on the UK adhering to the European Convention for Human Rights, and pray that our government will respect the agreement that we helped to draw up over 70 years ago. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for the former residents of the camp in Calais and for those who remain there. We pray for the protection of all people in refugee camps and the communities they build. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for the refugees arriving in the UK and ending up in former military barracks and camps, those placed in detention at arrival, and those made homeless on being granted asylum. We pray for their mental and physical well-being and for the recognition of their right to decent housing. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

For the comforting of all who have lost loved ones in the course of fleeing from their home country, or who have had to experience the trauma of watching others die. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

For a resolution to the conflicts and oppression which are forcing so many to flee in desperation, and the realisation of the right of people to remain in their homes. We pray for the people of Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, and Ukraine, and especially at this time for those forced from their homes in Gaza and the West Bank. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for those who are fleeing the effects of climate change, with rising sea levels, drought, flood or crop failure, yet who have caused little or no damage to our climate; for those who make decisions about compensation, and those who continue to exploit the earth for profit. We ask forgiveness for our complicity in this. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for the safety and success of those serving aboard the rescue ships: the *Sea Watch 3*, the *Life Support*, the *Aurora*, the *Imara*, the *Rise Above*, the *Nadir*, the *Geo Barents*, the *Wind Express*, the *Ocean Viking*, the *Open Arms*, the *Aita Mari*, the *Trotamar III*, and others; and of the volunteers of the Alarm Phone, and the reception teams on the Greek and Italian islands. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for the end of the arms trade and militarism, which aggravate and sponsor these conflicts. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray that you create in all citizens the strength and resilience to continue to resist unjust immigration laws and to support one another in this struggle. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray that you inspire compassion in all those who work with migrants on behalf of governments, and that they recognise all those they come across as their brothers and sisters. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

Leader invites those present to add other prayers if they wish.

Act of Faith and Commitment

Iona Abbey Worship Book 2001

Leader: Let us affirm our faith.

**We believe that God is present
In the dark before dawn;
In the waiting and uncertainty
Where fear and courage join hands,
Conflict and caring link arms,
And the sun rises over barbed wire.
We believe in a with-us God
Who sits down in our midst
To share our humanity.
We affirm a faith
That takes us beyond the safe place:**

**Into action, into vulnerability
And into the streets.
We commit ourselves to work for change
And put ourselves on the line;
To bear responsibility, take risks,
Live powerfully and face humiliation;
To stand with those on the edge;
To choose life
And be used by the Spirit
For God's new community of hope.
Amen.**

Hymn – "For Everyone Born"

For everyone born, a place at the table,
For everyone born, clean water and bread,
A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
For everyone born, a star overhead,

(Chorus:)

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy.

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
Abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
In anger, in hurt, a mind-set of mercy,
For just and unjust, a new way to live

(Chorus)

For everyone born, a place at the table,
To live without fear, and simply to be,
To work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
For everyone born, the right to be free

(Chorus)

All introduce themselves briefly. Any announcements are given.