

Sunday 30th August



During lockdown many people found they were dreaming and remembering their dreams, whereas before they either thought they didn't dream (unlikely) or could never remember the dream (likely). Night-time dreams can be weird, or frightening or comforting, but they seem to be ways of sorting out our thoughts that are necessary to our brain health.

In a strange way, we sometimes feel that the pandemic is a kind of dream from which we hope we'll wake up soon, and everything will be as it was. But rather than fretting, we can use this time to pray for a vision of what can be, for dreams can be visions that inspire us.

The Bible has many instances of God using dreams or visions to guide (eg. Joseph, **Matthew 1:19-25**, Joseph and the Wise Men, **Matthew 2:12-15**) and to challenge, Peter's dream and subsequent understanding that verified the Gentile Mission (**Acts 10:9-48**) is an example. And, of course, there is the Old Testament Joseph, there are the Prophets – so many dreamers, so many visionaries!

But in all of these instances, the vision or dream required to be acted upon.

We all have dreams, especially in our youth, then as we get older, we also have dreams for the young in our families. Most of us have dreams for society. The reality, of course, is that many of these dreams turn to dust and it's just as well that some of them do! The sadness lies in the dreams that do not match our capacities. Were I to dream of being a great mathematician, for example, I would be doomed to disappointment, even if I worked very hard. We need to be real!

Dangerous dreams are those of personal glory at all costs, and I leave you to provide your own examples of this from the world today. There are plenty to choose from.

But I go back to the fact that God uses our dreaming to share visions of what can be, but that dream, that vision requires action on our behalf. Fulfilment of the dream of using our natural abilities requires that we actually use them rather than just dreaming what could be 'if'. Fulfilment of the dream of a just world requires us to act justly in our own lives and to speak out against injustice, even when we're a bit scared to do so. And all of it needs a whole lot of prayer.

Iona Abbey (picture overleaf), was restored following George MacLeod's vision of the ruin made new, but it took a great deal of faith and prayer and courage and sheer hard work before the dream became a reality, and has been needed subsequently to maintain the Community and seek further vision. But the result has been massive blessing for thousands who have travelled to the island, found a depth to their faith and new life. What are your deepest dreams? Will you work and pray to make them new?

Pray that we all dream dreams of hope for everyone
and work to make the vision live.



Iona Abbey in June.

Both photographs Ruth Crofton, who loves skies!

A Prayer

Loving God, who weaves our dreams into things of wonder,
through them calling us, guiding us, laughing with us,
we praise and thank you for the gift of imagination,
of daydreaming that leads to vision and hope,
and the playful dream that brings us peace.

In this confusing time in the life of the world, we pray your Spirit's gentle guiding,
the breeze that blows our thoughts in right directions and towards goals
that will liberate the earth and bring peace to all,
the breeze that blows through the dusty corridors of power
to bring a breath of life to stifling thoughts and decisions.

In this nightmare time for so many who are afflicted by violence and fear all around them and the danger of Covid always present, we pray the healing touch of your Spirit, within nations at war, within refugee camps, within ruined cities and devastated countryside, bringing hope where there is despair, trust where it is broken, healing where there is illness and pain and loss . . .

In this gentle, dreaming time, when many still have time to pause and look about them, we pray the discernment of your Spirit to see what is and what is not of you, and to choose the right, the life-giving way forward.

Bring light, we pray, to churches emerging into new ways of worship, bring true vision of what can be now and what could be in the future.

Lord, may we be people of hope, showing the love that Christ brings to individuals as they reach out to him, and to society as it does likewise.

Loving God, Father, Son and Spirit, to you we offer our praying, our dreaming, our living, that they may be used for the furtherance of your Kingdom of justice and of peace.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

Blessings, Ruth