

Sanctuary

Welcome to our reflection for Church without Walls

Here are some ideas of how to use these reflections:

Pray that God will lead your thoughts.

Sit comfortably, take a few deep breaths and relax.

Let your mind wander as you read the reflection. Write down your thoughts in a notebook. If you are busy, try and pick out something to take with you in odd moments during the day.

You may wish to memorise the Bible verse. Write it out and stick it up somewhere.

Bible Verses

Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. (Psalm 16:1)

He alone is my refuge, my place of safety. (Psalm 91:2)

Reflection

The following word and its definition came up on Facebook the other day, and caught my attention.

Caim (kyem) (Scots Gaelic)

Sanctuary; an invisible circle of protection, drawn around the body with the hand, to remind one of being safe and loved, even in the darkest times.

(Facebook – Gary McDaniel)

The word sanctuary struck me, because at the moment the majority of us feel that our home is our sanctuary.

However, when I researched what a circling (caim) prayer was, I discovered this:

Circling prayers involve using our arm outstretched to trace the shape of a circle around ourselves. This circle can be for oneself, but then extended to include a community, a nation, and ultimately the world. By extending caim protection, we are inviting the whole world to be part of our lives. So sanctuary here may extend to the whole world.

What does sanctuary mean for you? Is it a particular place? The Bible tends to talk about particular places as sanctuaries. This Celtic thought is that sanctuary can be found anywhere and everywhere. Does the world outside our front door feel like a sanctuary at the moment?



This Celtic concept of prayer using the circle probably came from Christians wanting to make Christianity acceptable to the pagan worship of the sun god, which was represented by a circle. We do not worship creation, but we are recognising how much we are part of it and dependent on it. How does the Celtic joining together of the cross and the circle, as seen in the photograph, speak to us today about how by engaging with other faith traditions we may discover that we expand our knowledge of God?

The word sanctuary, originally used to refer to a holy place, has come to mean a refuge or safety from pursuit, persecution, or other danger. You could pray for refuges and refugee camps.

Perhaps you can use a form of caim prayer this week, especially to give you strength as you face the outside world.

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