

A Reflection for Pilgrim Church
August 3, 2025
Rev. Reebee Kavich Girash

Luke 14: 12-14, as offered by Caro, Iona's Warden, during
worship at Iona Abbey July 2025

Jesus was eating a meal in the house of one of the leading teachers of the law, and he said to his host, 'Whenever you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends or colleagues or wealthy neighbours. They might invite you in return and thus repay you.

No, when you have a party, invite those who never get invited out because they are deemed awkward, or different, or unworthy. And then you will be, and experience, a blessing. Then, even if they can't repay, it shouldn't matter to you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of God's people.

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(I have just returned from sabbatical. My final week was at Iona Abbey on the island of Iona, Scotland.)

In the Iona Community, within the walls of this Abbey, nothing is disposable.

In the morning when you make your tea, it's in a hearty mug which you wash by hand with a microfiber cloth that is color coded for its purpose and reuse. You dry your mug with another towel

that has been used and laundered again and again. Your tea bags, surely bought with care and fair trade, are composted to continue the cycle. Nothing is disposable here.

In the Abbot's House where we stay, we press a button to get thirty seconds of water from the shower. We can press as many times as we like, but we are reminded each time: water is life. Even water is precious here.

In the Abbey Church, there are walls a thousand years old. In some places the local ferns have taken root within the mortar but they, too, are not taken out or thrown away. They become as wreaths bringing color to the high stone walls of the chancel. In the Abbey Church not even a weed is unvalued.

In the Abbey Refectory, nothing is disposable. Once the locally sourced supper is complete, we tuck our bandana napkins back in our pockets for the next meal. There is no plastic here. Our apple cores are composted and our leftovers carefully stored for the volunteers' intimate meal on Friday when the guests have all ferried away again. In the Abbey, no fruit of the earth is disposable.

When we walk around the island together on sacred Pilgrimage, we go at the slowest one's pace and thus our hurriedness gives way to noticing. Around the Abbey, no moment is disposable.

Here, this week, scraps of paper are cut into squares to receive sacred, tender prayer requests: the names of those in need of healing are read aloud by candlelight in the Abbey Church

connecting all of us to all of you for whom we pray. In Community, scraps become offerings and even paper is not disposable.

In the Abbey Cloister, fallen walls have become a sacred site, not swept away for the new.

In the Abbey Community, when one of us walks in a near tumble and speaks with staggered, marbled words, we pause, and wait, and listen until we hear. Because in the community, nothing is disposable.

Here in the Abbey we learn, imagine and pray that in the Kingdom of God, nothing and no one is disposable.