

## Sabbatical Reflections

In the autumn of 2009, I spent three months away from my parish on study leave, during which I explored **Christian urban communities** and their **response to the challenges of urban life**.

My time away was to be a time of **experiential learning**, releasing me from the daily routines and duties of parish ministry, to meet new situations and people, and to see and hear what others are doing in response to the gospel and to join in as and when possible ...

For the first part of this time away, I visited groups and churches in London, Rome, Paris and Glasgow.

Then I lived and worked for seven weeks as a volunteer cook on Iona in the Inner Hebrides with the Iona Community, a dispersed Christian community, whose origins were in Glasgow in the great recession of the 1930s, offering hospitality to people from all over the world.

At the end of the three months I also had an opportunity to visit the other Holy Island, Lindisfarne, and learn about the life of the different Christian communities and their welcome to thousands of visitors there.

If you want to read some of my reflections in detail and see some of my pictures that can give you a glimpse of what I've been getting up to, please visit my blog at <http://menetekel.wordpress.com> .

JEU D'ESPRIT

FLAME DANCING SPIRIT  
COME  
SWEEP US OFF OUR FEET  
AND  
DANCE US THROUGH OUR DAYS  
SURPRISE US WITH YOUR RHYTHMS  
DARE US  
TO TRY NEW STEPS  
EXPLORE NEW PATTERNS  
AND NEW PARTNERSHIPS  
RELEASE US FROM OLD ROUTINES  
TO SWING IN ABANDONED JOY  
AND FEARFUL ADVENTURE  
AND IN THE INTERVALS  
REST US  
IN YOUR STILL CENTRE

A prayer given to me by a parishioner before the beginning of my sabbatical.

Heinz Toller