

As Christians up and down the country adjust to a new life as churches are closed, Gilo, the *Co-Editor of Letters to a Broken Church*, offers this meditation

Meditation on the closing of churches

Churches may be glad of the stillness.
These great stone ships seldom have the chance to
hunker down into replenishing silence.

Christianity is too talkative. Noisy religion.
The Society for Standing Up and Sitting Down Again.
The Society for Annunciation of a Momentary Silence

You see your empty church and see shipwreck
And think that because you are not there in linen robes
with rehearsals of creeds, that prayer is not there.

But your churches and temples are not empty.
Silence is there. Praying in her many houses.
Clergy nor creed nor any religion own Her.
Stillness beyond all religion,
Yet deeply at its core,
Even while you fill temples with the clatter of words.

Let Silence be the guardian and keeper of these stone vessels.
She who keeps the stillness on the ocean's floor
Who tends the cave where no noise echoes because no noise enters
Hers is the aching heart that hides ancient atomic groan
And her home, the rest between the beats in every heartbeat
Look out to the stars beyond the stars and listen
Listen to Her listening to the listening of your own

Go within and find Her in the hush.
In the breath of alleluia in the night
In the inhalation of hope before waking
Hers is the softness between the breath.
And the hidden quiet light that lingers at a death

Do not fret about your empty church.
Silence holds the space holy
And always did.
She holds all things and mourns all things
She is in all things
She holds every story but her own.
She knows each name, with no need to know her own
Let Silence guard the stillness and the stones.
While you care for the bereaved and those full of fear
That is your creaturely task. The task of all who call each to be priest to each and every other.

And when the great keys are turned, the wooden doors re-open,
Tread gently. Do not rush to fill the stillness

The great stone ships held their prayer for you.
They bade the Absolute to enter in.
They prayed with you.

Honour them with silence of your own.