

Prayer of Saint Columba

*Be a bright flame before me O God, a guiding star above me.  
Be a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me, today, tonight, and for ever.  
Alone with none but you, my God I journey on my way; what need I fear when you are near, O  
Lord of night and day? More secure am I within your hand, than if a multitude did round me  
stand. Amen.*

St Columba is patron saint of floods, bookbinders and poets. He was an Irish abbot and missionary who helped spread Christianity in Scotland in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. He founded the abbey on Iona, which is still used by many Christians today. Columba's Feast Day is the 9<sup>th</sup> June.

During difficult times Columba's simple prayer can help us stay alongside the struggles people may have with isolation, home learning or being alone.

*Be a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me, today, tonight, and for ever.*

Sometimes life has difficulties, like stones or boulders on a path. Christians pray that our paths may be clear and that with God's guiding love all challenges can be overcome. People in 6<sup>th</sup> century Scotland would know that shepherds care for sheep and keep them safe and free from danger. This what Christians believe that God does for them. God's love is given freely, it is endless; it finds us wherever we are.

*Be a bright flame before me O God, a guiding star above me.*

Christians believe that God is three-in-one; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The image of a flame, like those dancing on peoples' heads at Pentecost, is sometimes used of Jesus, the 'Light of the World'. Christians believe that through the words of Jesus we can become better people. The Wise Men followed the star to Bethlehem, where they found God's most precious gift in a stable.

*More secure am I within your hand, than if a multitude did round me stand.*

This is a very poignant line, given social distancing and many people being alone for long periods of time. Even in challenging times like these, when we may be alone, God is beside us. Columba is confident that we just need to step in God's footsteps, on his path.

*Alone with none but you, my God I journey on my way; what need I fear when you are near, O Lord of night and day?*

A relationship with God is special and unique to each of person. Our church buildings may be closed but God is always open. He is always listening. Each of us have difficult times, problems to overcome or sadness in our lives. Columba says that we should not be afraid of difficulty, because God is with us. God is guiding and strengthening us on every step of the way.

Learn more about St Columba and his life. Create a picture or painting showing images from St Columba's Prayer. Find out what Iona is like by researching safely online.

O Lord our Guide, We pray that you will guide us and light our path of so that we can courageously walk every day of our lives.  
Amen