

Cathedral, Solace of Grace

Immense, tall, majestic, rising above me, perfection in stone.
Cascades of arches, pillars wide, consoling, firm embrace.
Cold and carved, meticulously measured.

Palace for God, standing proud, with no apology.
Invisible footprints of faith that walked on murky, stone
slabs.
Footsteps of those who knew the story and believed.

A story of life, of incarnate God, of people, of happenings
Wealth, poverty, love and loss conjoined here as incense burned, long ago.
Daily, relentlessly, a pulsing rhythm of prayer within these walls.

Colours and pictures, light that glows and transforms emptiness.
Story of love revealed, unravelling now to those who take the time,
To pause, stand, kneel, breathe within this place.

Community of people past and present, lost, bemused like me.
If walls could speak, what pleas and tales would abound?
Absorbed by this still, sure oasis in a frantic city.

Vestle of holiness, hidden spaces, waiting silently.
When a glimpse of peace or 'God' I seek.
May your wide armed shell, emblazoned with light, awaken the presence.

In the midst of tangled spiral... life,
Where questions, fears and doubts take hold.
You hold me safe, cool balm in troubled times and good.

Janet Marshall
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After reading the poem...

- *Look through the vocabulary, adjectives that have been used by the writer to express what the Cathedral looks like and feels like. How has it increased the impact of this poem on the emotions and thoughts?*
- *What are the things that the place, the structure have brought to mind in the writer?*
- *How does being in the building make the writer feel?*
- *In verse 6 the writer talks about a 'vestle of holiness'. Can a building like this really contain 'holiness'?*
- *What does a believer mean by 'holiness'?*
- *Who do you think the people are that the writer imagines have walked with invisible footprints here?*
- *Why do you think the writer finds going into this Cathedral helpful, what is it about the place that is a 'cool balm' in times of trouble and good?*

***Can you think of a place that evokes feelings of support, beauty and peace/help for you?
Could you write a poem about that place to express how it makes you feel being there?***

Paint a mood picture or do a sketch to show pictorially the moods, thoughts and feelings that the cathedral evokes in the writer.

Would a Medieval Christian have these sorts of thoughts about being in the Cathedral back then do you think?