INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE 2026

SANCTUARY OF THE HEART

The

OPEN HEART

and the

EMPTY CHAIR

A Prayer Service

for Survivors of Abuse

5th May 2026

The OPEN HEART and the EMPTY CHAIR

National Day of Prayer

for Survivors of Abuse

5th May 2026

WELCOME PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for bringing us together,
just as we are:
different individuals you have loved into being.
Grant us the gifts of patience and understanding
as we truly listen with love to one another and to you.
Bless our time together as, with your help,
we seek to walk in your ways.

WELCOME PRAYER

We ask your blessing of love,
and the healing of your Spirit
on all of us who are burdened
with pain and suffering:
and all those represented by our Empty Chair.

OUR SYMBOLS

THE “UNIFYING” MEDITATION

LUKE 2: 15-19 TREASURING THE BIRTH OF HER SON

And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying
which was spoken to them about this child.

And all that heard it wondered at the things
which were spoken unto them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

LUKE 2: 48-51 LOSING AND FINDING A SON

And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.
And he went down with them and came to Nazareth
and was submissive to them.

And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

SHARED SILENCE

If anyone feels led to speak,
you are warmly invited to share
a word or short phrase that describes
your journey.

RESPONSE

We respond:

Heart of Jesus,

hold this truth.

THE ACT OF COLLECTIVE REPARATION

Reparation is a process towards
“restoring the image of God”.

Pope Francis

OUR INTENTION

As we place these stones,
we acknowledge that
the Church owes a debt of love and restoration
to each and every survivor.

We stand, in solidarity,
with those whose trust was broken.

THE RITUAL

Each person is invited to place their stone in the bowl of water.

TESTIMONY

We listen to
the words of a survivor.

A LITANY OF THE WOUNDED HEART

Heart of Jesus, seat of all sincerity and truth.

Restore the truth that was silenced by abuse.

A LITANY OF THE WOUNDED HEART

Heart of Jesus, broken for the broken-hearted.

Gather and restore

the fragments of our shattered selves.

A LITANY OF THE WOUNDED HEART

From the betrayal of trust
by those who claimed to serve you.

Deliver us, O Lord.

A LITANY OF THE WOUNDED HEART

From the “death of the soul” and the loss of hope.

Deliver us, O Lord.

A LITANY OF THE WOUNDED HEART

That our scars may be seen as the scars of Christ.

Lord, give us your peace.

A LITANY OF THE WOUNDED HEART

That we may find a home in your heart,
where no one is invisible.

Lord, give us your peace.

CLOSING PRAYER

O God,

you do not look at us from a distance,

but you entered our pain

through the opened Heart of your Son.

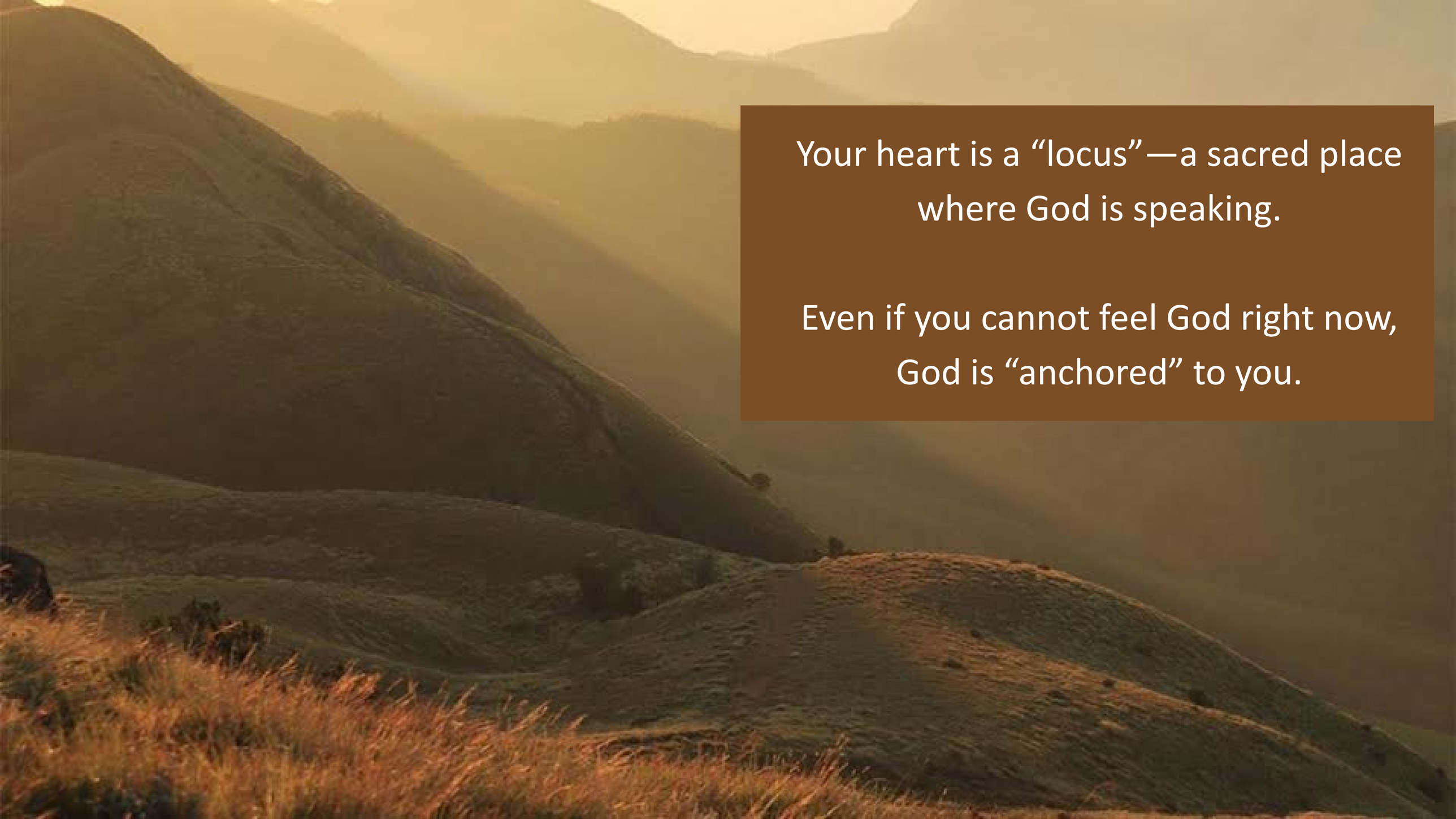
CLOSING PRAYER

Help us to see that our wounds

are not a source of shame,

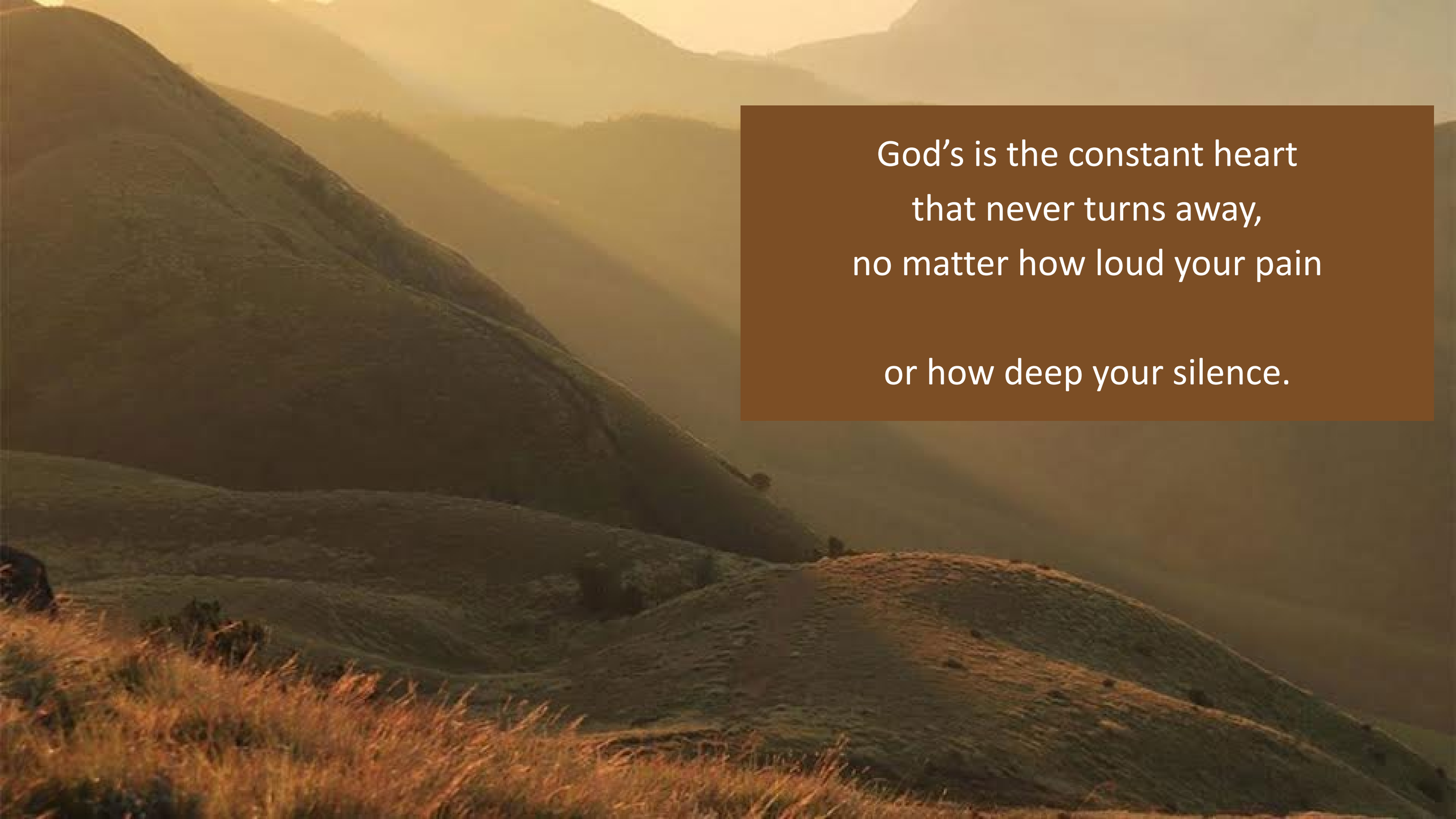
but the very place where your light enters.

Through Christ our Lord: Amen.



Your heart is a “locus”—a sacred place where God is speaking.

Even if you cannot feel God right now, God is “anchored” to you.


God’s is the constant heart
that never turns away,
no matter how loud your pain
or how deep your silence.

The OPEN HEART and the EMPTY CHAIR

Please join us in the St Michael's Centre for refreshments.