

30th May 2020

Children

**“When the voices of children are heard on the green
And laughing is heard on the hill.”**

William Blake, Songs of Innocence

I'm missing the voices of children: the excited squeals sweeping across the playground when morning break begins in the local school; the noisy chatter at the end of the school day as children rush to the adults at the gate; the excitement of little ones playing games in our church hall; the gurgling of a new-born, or even the screaming of a hungry baby. Yes, I'm missing the voices of children.

My granny would say, "Little children should be seen and not heard". But my heart says: "Let the children have their voice", for in them we have all our hopes and dreams.

In the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, there is this little story:

People were bringing little children to Jesus . . . but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant . . . "Let the little children come to me . . . for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these . . ." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

How would I have reacted? Be one of the men dismissing the folk whose children might disrupt things; be someone bringing their kids along just to see what was happening; stand scratching my head at this kingdom of God stuff? I have no idea. But I'd like to think that in welcoming the voices of children, I would have felt welcomed. I'd like to think that when the children were blessed, I would have felt blessed too.

Children are our future. Let their voices be heard, voices guided and nurtured, strengthened and clarified by every single one of us who has ever given thanks for a child or felt blessed by their presence.

Oh, how I'm missing the voices of children ...

A Prayer for today

Loving God, we are your children. You welcome us, and bring us close. Let us rejoice with children's voices, as we, coming to you, know we are blessed. Amen.

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