

19<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## Together

**“People will come from east and west and north and south,  
and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.”**

*Bible, Luke 13:29*

The Church of All Nations (officially, “The Basilica of the Agony”) is situated on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, next to the Garden of Gethsemane, over an outcrop of rock where Jesus is said to have prayed on the night of his arrest. Resting on the foundations of churches from 746 and 1345, the Church of All Nations was built between 1919 and 1924 using funds donated by many different countries. In small domes inside the church are emblems of the nations of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Italy, France, Spain, the UK, Belgium, Canada, Germany and the USA, and in a series of mosaics, depictions of Ireland, Hungary and Poland. The crown round the “Rock of the Agony” is a gift from Australia.

Here is a living symbol of Jesus’ affirmation to his friends in the Gospel of Luke. People from many nations have come together to create a place of worship for everyone – surely a pointer to the Kingdom of God.

We all need to work at creating togetherness. Jean Vanier, the founder of *L’Arche*, wrote these helpful words in *Be not Afraid* in 1993:

*Living together is difficult for human beings. Goldfish seem to manage it – you rarely see head-on collisions. Cows seem to manage it all right in the same pasture – at least until the bull comes along. But put ten [people] together in a house and ... tensions arise ... Community takes a long time to form ... A community is only a community when most of the people in it have made the passage from ‘the community for me’ to ‘me for the community’.*

Where are our living symbols, locally, nationally and internationally, of that kind of togetherness, where the attitude is about acceptance and not selfishness, welcome and not exclusiveness, embrace and not suspicion? The “me” still matters, but only when it is accepting of all the other “me”s in a mirror of the God’s Kingdom.

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, you’ve created me in your image and invite me to your table. Let me see in all those who sit with me an image of your love, so that we might create together a living and true image of your Kingdom. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*  
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