

4th December 2020

Sharing

“All that I have, I share with you.”

Book of Common Prayer, Alternative Service Book

When my daughter was a Nursery Nurse, she was fascinated to see how pre-school children play next to each other and look as though they're sharing even though they're not. In a sandpit or the kitchen corner, they're together, right enough. But they're not sharing. It's called "parallel play". They haven't yet learned to share. It'll come. Parallel play will turn into proper sharing when they learn to accommodate one another, not to bully or be possessive, and to deal with falling out. They'll learn to share.

Sometimes, in adult life, we need to relearn the capacity to share. Like little children, we can live next to each other, in close proximity, in streets and neighbourhoods, and look as if we're sharing. But we're not. It's not called "parallel play" anymore. We might call it selfishness. But, whatever it is, it isn't sharing. We've forgotten, or haven't fully learned, how to. Will it come? I hope so, when selfishness gives way to proper sharing, and we all learn to live in community as we should.

And in the global context? Nations can exist next to each other and look as if they're sharing. The UN, international summits, the G7, and all that. But genuine sharing? It doesn't always seem that way. It's not called "parallel play" anymore. It's more "international tension". It's not sharing. We've forgotten, or haven't learned, how to be a global community. Harmony and equity will come. "Man to man the world o'er shall brithers be for a' that", as Robert Burns wrote. It *has* to come, for the good of all.

And Christmas? Will this be a time of "parallel play", doing things for the sake of it but not really engaging with the real meaning? The Incarnation means Love has come into the Nurseries of our living, not to stand and ignore us, not to be "parallel" with us and never engage, but to be truly *with* us, share with us, play with us, collaborate with us. And if that's true, and we're the better for it, we need to share more of that Love in the personal, community and global aspects of our lives.

Reflecting a theme in *With an Open Eye* by Tom Gordon

A prayer for today

Lord, I have so much. Help me to share with those who have so little. Amen

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