

1st April 2021

Leading

**“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
and a little child shall lead them.”**

Bible, Isaiah 11:6

At the height of the debate in the Church of Scotland over the validity of the service of gay clergy in the Church, there was the opportunity for the ministers in one area of the country to share in a Service of Holy Communion together. This location had been a hotbed of controversy, but it was believed that the Sacrament of Communion could be an opportunity for reconciliation, brothers and sisters being together round the Lord's Table, where divisions were laid aside as they looked for the unity of Christian fellowship in the Eucharist. Before the service began, one minister looked into the Sanctuary and, seeing an openly gay minister there, refused to go in, stating that to share the Lord's table with a gay minister would, in their eyes, diminish the meaning of the Sacrament.

Compare that with a video-clip I saw recently of a church congregation sharing Holy Communion together a while ago. The Peace had been shared, and people were settling back into their places, when a little lad, Leo, aged 2, decided he wasn't done yet, and continued to go round every member of the congregation to shake their hand. Everyone waited till he was done. The worship was, to quote the minister, "stopped in its tracks". And not one member of that congregation didn't have a smile on their face. It was a "God moment" of wonder and beauty.

Tonight, as people gather round the Lord's Table for the Sacrament of Holy Communion, virtually or in person, sharing bread and wine in a moment of Eucharistic wonder and beauty, I pray that "a little child shall lead them". Let the spontaneity, openness, inclusiveness and welcome of a child create a spirit of reconciliation and not divisiveness, acceptance and not judgement, beauty and not pain. Wolf or lamb, leopard or kid, calf, young lion or fatling, let us sit together to receive Christ's Body and Blood, given for all.

A prayer for today

Lead me, Lord, to an understanding of your purpose, that all might be welcomed at your table, as you, in your Grace and Mercy, welcome me. Amen

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