

BEING, WORKING IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER IS VITAL TO OUR EXISTENCE, ISN'T IT?

Hi Friends,

Happy New Church Year,

In the early part of 1885, the curtain was raised at the Savoy Theatre in London for the performance of a new comic opera called "THE MIKADO", a most unlikely story of the son of Mikado- or Emperor of Japan-who ran away disguised as a wandering minstrel. The opera was the work, as we all know, of Gilbert and Sullivan: W.S. Gilbert wrote the words and Arthur Sullivan the music. People had already enjoyed previous operas which two had written, but The Mikado has to become the best known of them all.

Gilbert and Sullivan were an odd pair. W.S. Gilbert loved humour and was able to work out the strangest of plots, which always seemed to come right in the end. Arthur Sullivan was more seriously minded and composed other songs, hymns tunes and pieces of orchestral music. Within a few years they have produced several other operas. In some ways they seemed to be perfect partners, yet they quarrelled frequently over little things, and finally parted company after a quarrel about a carpet. What a pity that two such talented and gifted people were unable to work together in harmony!

Some of the finest music in the world is played by an orchestra, in which each instrument has a particular part: strings, woodwind, brass, percussion. To ensure that all the instruments play at the correct time, and with the correct volume, the orchestra has a conductor. Each member of the orchestra has his own piece of music, but the conductor has the complete score-the music for every instrument that is being played. If all the instrumentalists obey the conductor they play in harmony, but imagine what would happen if members of an orchestra began to think that they could do a better job than the conductor? Or they thought they were more important than they actually were. Or wished that they could play another instrument? That is when disharmony would creep in.

That is when envy, pride, hate, greed would rear their ugly heads. It is envy, pride, and greed-with the addition of hate-that cause all the world's disharmony; all the bloodshed, oppression, nepotism, discrimination and suffering for hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, children and even animals. It is these four distasteful ingredients that are behind all the world's trouble spots at the moment, not sparing the mystical body of Christ and all major faiths. If you stop to unravel all the fine words that are spoken and written from one side to the other.

How much better it would be, then, if we could all try to be cleansed from the effects of envy, pride and greed and so on. Because things will not change in the world until we change, will they. It is down to each one of us in our comfort zone or small corner to spread harmony and love. We need to be at peace ourselves, so here is a prayer for us.

God of mercy and peace, you created us in your image, forming one human family. You love all your children without discrimination, and invite us to love each of our neighbours as ourselves. In hope, we lift up to you for healing the tensions and racism that plague our nation and, in the world, and pray for increasing harmony and peace within our communities, and in our hearts. Amen.

When we have moments of doubt, let us look at the seasons, at the death and resurrection of each season, the cycle of life and be encouraged. Let us also be an encouragement to others as they struggle with loss and grief. Jesus says in John 10:10, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' Let us live a full life in joy and harmony with one another! This vital to our growth and existence, as church family. Let us put our faith into action by loving, caring and living in peace wherever we find ourselves. Thank you.

Devotedly yours

George.