

Prayer Letter November 2024

THE CHILDREN AMONG US

Every time a child is carried to baptism in my church, this text from the Gospel of Mark is read (Mark 10, 13-16): ¹³People were bringing children to him in order that he might touch them, and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The adults around Jesus did not want the children to come to him. They probably didn't think he should spend time with them. Maybe they were a bit noisy too. But Jesus thought the opposite. He said: Come, the children belong. He made no distinction between adults and children.

We often think of childhood as a stage on the way to adulthood, that it is only when you are an adult that you are a full-fledged human being, when you have become wise and sensible - and boring? Jesus turns it around. Recognizing children as full human beings means that adults are not treated as the norm for what a human being is. The child does not need to become an adult to be considered a full human being. To put it another way: A child's calling is to be a child.

Jesus said more: he said that to get to where he lives, you must receive like a little child does. Jesus probably knew that we who are adults cannot become children again, but perhaps we can learn to be curious like children. Dare to wonder about what Jesus is telling us. To see and think more out of the box. Children who haven't yet learned that we should adapt but can play and imagine. Everything around us can become exciting things. Pinecones and small sticks become treasures, beds become ships that fly to the moon, the living room floor becomes lava, pillows become islands and stones become beautiful collectibles. We can learn from our children that everything God has created is given to us for our pleasure, if we manage to take care of it.

The Swedish poet Margareta Melin has written the poem **Thank you for the children.**

You who are the source of love
and the life of our own life
thank you for the children among us.
Being human and living in this world is not easy.
Preserve them for all the hard things

Thank you for your light in their hearts
your presence in all stages of life.
May they experience love and pass it on.
May they be happy to exist and find their way step
by step. Your blessing on them and on us all!

Our prayer topic this month is children, and we pray especially for

- children living in war and strife
- children forced to live in the Gaza Strip
- children who are orphans
- the children who are around us in our daily lives

Marianne Uri Øverland