

## **“Putting Away Childish Things” Elements of the Bridging Ceremony**

**Kahlil Gibran, On Children**

**Read by Forest Abbot-Lum**

(Slightly adapted by LBU for “Putting Away Childish Things.” 1May11)

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, "Speak to us of Children."

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as (the archer) loves the arrow that flies, so (does he) love also the bow that is stable.

### **Introduction to the Bridging Ceremony- Reverend Leland Bond-Upson**

Today's text is from Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13. These are three of the most quoted verses of the New Testament, and they appear one after another, verses 11, 12, 13

*Verse 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child: but when I became (full-grown), I put away childish things.*

This means simply that in everyone's life there comes a time to get serious. Launching yourself into the world is a serious, grown-up thing—taking your education or training seriously; finding out what kind of work will be most harmonic with who you are; finding a way to support yourself; finding out what kind of life partner will be most harmonic with who you are. And who are you? Finding out who you are, is serious. And exciting. And deep.

*Verse 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

This means simply that greater clarity will come as you work to understand everything, not as a child, but as an adult. The gospel writer is thinking of being known by God--and so do we, only we think of that as a knowing of yourself by yourself, with the help of others, with the help of all creation.

Elsewhere in The Prophet, from which Forest read, it is written, "You can learn to love (everyone) by knowing yourself."

Finally, verse 13, very famous: *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

You have been raised in a free church. Because we are liberals we believe in freedom and generosity, so you have had and will have the freedom to figure out what your faith is. Most people your age have not been given that gift.

Young adulthood is a time of hope, and there's no reason to ever give it up.

And finally, charity. Many later versions of the Bible substitute "love" for "charity." But St. Paul is talking about kindness, which is what you get when you mix charity and love, half and half. The Dalai Lama says, "Essentially, my religion is kindness."

**Closing Words**

**Read by Reverend Leland Bond-Upson**

Because of those who came before, we are;

Despite their failings, we believe;

Because of, and despite of the horizons of their vision, we too, dream.

Let us go remembering to praise,

To live in the moment,

To love mightily, and

To bow to the mystery.

--Barbara Pescan #680