

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY GATHERING

15th November, 2023

Topic:

The Emperor of Ice Cream

Some perspectives on life after death



"**The Emperor of Ice-Cream**" is a poem from Wallace Stevens's first collection of poetry, *Harmonium* (1923).

Stevens had a strong sense of fulfilment of life. He did not see death in a special light. This poem is telling us to take things easy, but seriously. Ice cream is an incarnation of a sense of fulfilment. It is easily melted, but it is a natural thing. Stevens tells us to enjoy the ice cream now. Ice-cream is a symbol of the summit of ordinary people's delight. *Wikipedia*

ORDER FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING

Welcome and Introduction

We light the candle

One: We light this candle as a reminder that in Jesus we saw that love that is God so vividly displayed that it seemed to light up the world, and enabled us to identify truth and love wherever we saw it.

All: But lighting this candle also reminds us that Jesus called us to be Lights in this world, helping others to recognise truth, beauty and love when they see it.

J W Maddern

The candle is lit

Acknowledgement of Country

As an act of worship, we acknowledge that we have gathered on Kurna land and we express our deep regret at the way in which it was taken from them. Also we acknowledge their deep love for the land on which they lived, and pray that we all may develop that same love and respect for it. At this time, when many of them are feeling tragically ignored, may we all find a way to develop a deep respect for our First Nation friends.

J W Maddern

Acknowledgement of Diversity

We recognise our diversity, and in terms of the Uniting Church's Safe Church Policy, we acknowledge that this is a safe place in which all people can worship together, irrespective of race, creed, age, ability, sexuality, cultural background, or any other distinguishing feature.

CELEBRATING

Celebration of Life

One: We gather here to celebrate life's beauty and find healing for its pain, to wonder at the mystery that gave us birth, and to listen for the wisdom that guides us in the quietness of this moment.

We come and celebrate the richness and diversity of life.

All: Amen.

HYMN 'Nature's beauty'

Suggested tune TiS 142 Regent Square

Nature knows her sounds and movements
Heard and seen each day and night;
All her life in rich abundance
Fills my heart with great delight;
Celebrate with adoration;
Thankful for the world so bright.

Fearsome winds cause trees to whimper;
Storms can force the clouds to cry;
Raindrops, snowflakes dance together;
Sun and moon wink in reply;
Celebrate with adoration
All the wonders of the sky.

Celebrate all hidden textures;
Value all the roots below;
Celebrate all covered splendour;
Value beauty not on show;

Celebrate with adoration;
Thankful for the world we know.

Creatures bold and creatures timid
Offer beauty, each unique;
Trees and flowers paint a picture
On the plain and mountain peak;
Celebrate with adoration;
All revealed for those who seek.

We are blest with such profusion;
Beauty bursts out everywhere;
If we take the time to ponder
We may find a thankful prayer;
Celebrate with adoration
Thankful for the world we share.

*George Stuart
Used with permission*

For Reflection

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4: 8-9, 17

The Emperor of Ice-Cream Poem (verse 1)

Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.
Let the wenches dawdle in such dress
As they are used to wear, and let the boys
Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
Let be, be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Wallace Stevens

EXPLORING

Presentation

Podcast: Rev Dr Roger Ray

‘The emperor of ice cream’

Discussion

1. What do you think is the ‘take home’ message of the podcast?
2. The Ba Hai’s stated last month that they believe in an afterlife because this life is so short in the context of eternity. Perhaps the ‘Emperor of Ice Cream’ could be used to support this view, although Roger Ray uses it to support the contrary view. Discuss.

Hymn TiS 414 ‘There’s a spirit in the air’ – ‘Live tomorrow’s life today.’

Suggested tune ‘Vienna’ TiS 440

AFFIRMING

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS AND OURSELVES

One: We are people of all ages who bring our joys and concerns. We silently remember those in need. *(Pause)*

All: In all our joys and in all our concerns, may we be ever mindful of the presentness of the sacred among us, and may we see new possibilities of the now.

One: At this time we see scenes of devastation, through famine, drought, bushfires and war.

All: May we work in ways to restore peace and harmony, and may we not lose sight of the vision of nations dwelling in peacefulness together;

One: May we ever love our neighbour, whatever race or creed,

All: May love and truth guide us, and may a spirit of peace be within us.

One: May we open ourselves ever more fully to that Eternal Mystery which lures us onward toward life and creativity.

All: May we find the courage to live our faith, to speak our truth, and to strive together for a world where freedom abounds and justice truly does roll down like water.

In caring for one another

All May we be untiring.

In facing the future,

All May we be strong. Amen

Hymn TiS 609 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour'

SCATTERING

Parting Words

One: May the skies— heavens, galaxies, spaces between the stars— fill us with wonder.

All: May clouds shade us, may the sun shine its warmth upon us, and may we grow in grace and compassion, and envision a bright future. Amen.

The candle is extinguished

Notices