

Imagine...

This was a rather immediate reaction to all the media scaremongering after the July bombings in London when the whole idea of multiculturalism was under the spotlight. It is very tempting, like John Lennon in his song Imagine to dream of a world where there are no religions and no countries but that would make for a very boring heaven. I like to think that God's Shalom is rather different and a celebration of diversity and colour and life in all its fullness and expressions. This prayer ends by looking forward to a time of peace expressed in a diversity of languages representing just some of the world's faiths, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian. Imagine...

Imagine,
imagine there are no countries
imagine there are no races
imagine there are no cultures
imagine there are no religions
nothing to kill for
nothing to die for
no World War II
no London bombs.

imagine everyone in identical dress
imagine everyone eating from one menu
imagine everyone living in monochrome cities
imagine everyone believing one creed.
nothing to celebrate
nothing to mourn
nothing to spark debate
nothing to dream.

for there is no heaven while wars rage
there is no heaven while bombs shatter lives
there is no heaven while global warming goes unchecked
there is no heaven while some hoard and others go hungry
but there is also no heaven when everything is uniform
there is no heaven when life all tastes the same
there is no heaven when there is only one human habitat
there is no heaven when we are not free to hold our own beliefs.

Imagine,
imagine there are catwalks full of exotic clothes
imagine there are menus of gastronomic delight
imagine there are landscapes diverse as fantasy worlds
imagine there are religions to make everyday a festival celebration
everything to preserve life for
everything to live for
where we become friends with those who are different
where we enrich life by sharing food and customs across the divides.

For this is the taste of God's world we want to celebrate this
this is the canvas painted by God that is bursting with colour
this is the love of knowledge of God who cannot be confined to one scripture
this is the wisdom of God who invites us to share in Shanti

Salaam
Shalom

Pacem
Peace.

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