

## Thought for the day – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

By Revd John Marshall

Michael Curry's dad and Holy Communion

I have been reading *Love is the Way*, Bishop Michael Curry's autobiography. You may well remember him from Prince Harry and Meghan's wedding.

He remembers his father and mother and why he was led to be an Episcopalian Priest. Michael followed on.

In a chapter headed *Looking for God*, he writes.

"It was because of my mother that my father became an Episcopal priest. They had both been raised Baptist, but she became an Episcopalian in Chicago. While they were dating, she took my father to church. They were among the few Black parishoners in the pews that day. My father was amazed, but dubious, when it came time for Communion. The priest welcomed everyone to receive the body and blood of Christ --- and from a single communal chalice! Again, this was the 1940s. Jim Crow was alive and well. It was the North, but segregation and separation of the races was still the law of the land. President Franklin Roosevelt had just a few years earlier issued an executive order desegregating defence industries. The armed forces had not yet been integrated. *Brown v the Board of Education of Topeka* had not yet happened. The Montgomery bus boycott had not yet happened. Martin Luther King was still in seminary. And my father saw one cup from which everyone was to drink. One cup! One cup? My father huing back' as my mother went forward. He wondered if the priest would really offer her the common cup. And if he did, would others continue to drink from the same cup? He held his breath as my mother sipped. And as the cup was passed, the next person did drink. And the next. And the next. And the next.

When he told that story, he would always say, "Any church in which Blacks and Whites drink out of the same cup knows something about the Gospel that I want to be part of."

And so my mother led my father down a path that he probably would never have taken for himself – love in action."

- *Love is the Way* Michael Curry Hodder and Stoughton.

At the moment we are not able to partake of Holy Communion – and certainly not with a single common cup. However I found this story reassuring and inspiring.

And for the moment it is good to be able to share Spiritual Communion.