

**Which comes first, the fish or the river?** – Malcolm Guite  
*(Written for the week of Christian Unity 2014)*

Since every gift comes down from the All-Giver,  
How can I choose between the Giver's gifts  
Or say which should come first, the fish or river?

He scatters first, and then calls us to gather,  
To lavish on his work our smaller crafts  
And sail our praise upstream, back to the Giver.

He gives His gifts when we are met together,  
Not in our splits, our schisms, and our rifts:  
We cannot prize the Fish and not the River,

Divide the two and say 'which would you rather?'  
We float through time on fragile little rafts,  
But time and life alike flow from the Giver.



Away upstream,  
it all flows from the Father:  
The stream is His own Spirit,  
giving gifts;  
His Son, our brother,  
joins us in the River.  
He is our 'both-and' God,  
not 'or', or 'either';  
He gives full measure:  
steady, heady draughts!

The Giver must come first, always the Giver,  
We prize alike His gifts: both Fish and River.