

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 15

Sunday 26th April 2020

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday's edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Below Anna reflects on the well known passage of the two disciples who meet with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. She raises the vital question of how we can know God's presence with us and how our hearts can be 'gladdened with the sight of the risen Lord'. This is a question which seems particularly relevant for us in this time of extended lockdown.

Scripture Passage

Luke 24. 13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"

They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

¹⁹He asked them, "What things?"

They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests

and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

²⁵Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

I wonder if you can remember a time when you've been completely absorbed by what someone was saying? Perhaps listening to a close friend share some news with you, or a speaker telling an amusing story, or listening to a radio programme, or as child, listening to your favourite teacher?

In the film adaption of J. R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring* (the first book of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy), Bilbo Baggins is telling a story to a group of children, who sit enraptured at his feet, many with their mouths hanging open at



the extraordinary tale they are being told. And when Bilbo gets to an especially dramatic part in his story, one of the children even gasps with shock.

It can be an amazing experience to be so caught up in listening to someone that you almost forget who you are and where you are, because all your attention and focus is on the person speaking to you and what they are saying.

I wonder if that's what it was like for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus? As they put it, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

One of the disciples is named Cleopas, and biblical commentators commonly suggest that his companion was his wife. You can imagine their words coming out in a tumble as Jesus asks them what they have been discussing: they start with their hope that Jesus was the Messiah, only to go through the devastation of his death, and now the glimmers of hope mixed with utter incredulity at the idea he might be alive again. They must have been feeling

so many emotions (and I can't imagine being called "foolish" or "slow to believe" made them feel much better!). But then Jesus talks them through all the prophecies in what we call the Old Testament which predicted his coming, his death, and his resurrection. Wouldn't it have been amazing to have heard that? No wonder their hearts were burning within them!

And then, as Jesus blesses and breaks bread before them, they recognise him, and their hearts must have been overflowing with joy! So much so that they got up and rushed straight back to Jerusalem – a fourteen-mile round trip – because they were desperate to share the good news with the others. You can imagine them bursting into the house where the other disciples were, saying, "We've seen him! We've seen the Lord!" Maybe they even jumped for joy. And we can share in this joy too.

On the back page of the *Church Times*, there is always an interview with someone who talks about how their faith has shaped their life, and the final question is almost always, 'Who would you most like to be locked in a church with?' Now, at the moment, that clearly isn't an option for us! So perhaps it would be better to ask, 'Who would you most like to be in lockdown with?' Our answers, like those on the back page of the *Church Times*, will be very varied. But I'd like to suggest that we can all spend the lockdown with Jesus. Now, Jesus *probably* won't physically appear in our homes with us, but that doesn't mean he is not present, and we may even have the feeling of "our hearts burning within us". Or we might just feel a sense of peace and calm that we haven't felt in a while, or a sense of feeling loved and held. People experience Jesus' presence differently.

The Collect (special prayer) for this Sunday asks that we might have "such knowledge of Jesus' presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life". At a time when things are tough and it looks as though we will be in lockdown for a while longer, we can turn to Jesus to

strengthen and sustain us. So you might like to pray the Collect below, and then just sit, maybe with your eyes closed and hands open on your lap, and invite Jesus to make his presence known to you, as he did for the first disciples...

Anna

The Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Points for Prayers

- Thanksgiving for and celebration of Jesus' resurrection
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Need for further largescale testing
- Prayers for wisdom in government decisions particularly regarding the future of the lockdown
- Funerals needing to take place under new restrictions with only family mourners
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Why not try?

- Asking yourself how you have seen God at work in your spiritual life since the emergency e.g. perhaps greater trust in God?
- On Sundays lighting a candle near dusk and placing it in your window as a symbol of Christ the light of the world
- Keeping a journal, spending time in silence with God or reading a new or unfamiliar book of the Bible.

Excalibur and the Parishes Office

Because of concerns relating to the hand delivery of parish magazines and also the relative lack of available content an electronic rather than a printed version of Excalibur will be produced during the period of the restrictions. This will be available on the website, www.camelotparishes.co.uk. The May Excalibur is now online and can be downloaded from the homepage of the website.

The Parishes Office is now closed. Please contact Rob via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Diocesan weekly livestreamed services and reflections

Bishop Peter and Bishop Ruth will be livestreaming a mid-week Eucharist each week and offering recorded reflections each Sunday.

For further details please see the Diocesan website.

Some other streamed resources

Here are a selection of some streamed resources available online which you may find helpful:-

- The Royal School of Church Music website provides a Hymn of the Day and Sunday Self-Service with music, readings and prayers.
- The Prayer Book Society has details of online streaming of BCP services.

An inclusive Communion celebrated on behalf of the benefice

Ron and Pam will be celebrating Communion regularly in their home each Sunday at 10.00am. Please be aware of this, because even though no-one can join them, they are praying for us all and hope that you will feel included in this act of Communion.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love, as Christ loved us
and gave himself up for us' (Ephesians 5:2)*