

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 33

Sunday 28th July 2020

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot this Sunday. We continue our series on the Lord’s Prayer as Anna looks at what it means to pray ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done.’

Scripture Passages

Matthew 6.9-13

“Pray then in this way:
‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.’”

Matthew 13.31-32, 45-46

[Jesus] put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” ...

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Reflection

‘Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven...’

This week we consider the second phrase of the Lord’s Prayer: ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven’. But what does it mean to pray that God’s kingdom would come, and that His will would be done ‘on earth as in heaven’?

Essentially, it means praying that the earth would more fully become the place that God longs for it to be. The Message paraphrase of these verses says, ‘Set the world right; do what’s best – as above, so below’. In praying these words, we’re relinquishing control, or rather recognising that we were never really in control in the first place; we are saying that we want to live according to God’s will and that ultimately, we want the whole earth to exist according to God’s will. Just as heaven is God’s kingdom and the place where God’s will is done, so we wish earth to be.

So when we pray, ‘your kingdom come’, what kind of kingdom are we praying for? In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus offers a number of parables about the kingdom of heaven, many of which begin ‘the kingdom of heaven is like...’. Two of these parables are included above. (While Matthew refers to the kingdom of *heaven*, some of the other Gospels refer to the kingdom of *God*; they mean the same thing. As a Jewish writer, Matthew used the word ‘heaven’ instead of ‘God’ to ensure he did not accidentally break the third commandment and make wrongful use of God’s name.)

In the first of the two parables, Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed; it may start off very small (mustard seeds are on average 1-2 millimetres), but it grows so large that many birds can come and nest in its branches (mustard trees grow to be about 6 metres tall). This suggests that the kingdom of God is often surprising and unexpected. It is also a reminder that the kingdom of God is about hospitality and community: 'the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches'. The kingdom of God grows as people who are learning to do God's will come together and invite others to join them, and they all seek to do God's will together. But this doesn't mean the kingdom is all about numerical growth; it is about discovering God's will and seeing what surprising and unexpected things happen when we choose to do things his way.

In the second parable, Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like someone who has been searching for precious pearls, and when they find an exceptional pearl, they sell everything they own in order to have that one pearl. It has been suggested that the merchant is meant to represent those who are searching for the truth: they may have considered many different beliefs, philosophies and religions, but then maybe they get a glimpse of the kingdom, through the kindness of a Christian or through an encounter with God, and they know they have found the one 'pearl' worth having. And then their focus shifts, and what they want more than anything is to follow Jesus and to be part of his kingdom. Our priorities are reordered.

This is why the second half of the phrase – 'your will be done' – flows naturally from the first. We no longer wish to build up our own individual kingdoms, where we are in charge and it's all about us and what we want. Instead we offer up our life to God, learning how to build his kingdom and to do his will. This isn't always easy: there have been things I have really wanted to happen in my life or for other people and I have found it very hard to pray, '*your* will be done' rather than '*my* will be done'. When we pray 'your will be done' we are choosing to trust God; to trust that his will is ultimately what is best for us, what is good, what is right.

Thomas Merton was an American Catholic monk and writer, and he wrote a prayer that I think expresses what we might sometimes feel when we pray, 'your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven'. You might also find it helpful.

*My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

(Prayer of Thomas Merton)

Anna

Hymn Suggestion

A hymn which celebrates the difference made by the kingdom of God is 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun'. It is based on Psalm 72. A modern song on the theme of the kingdom is 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God'.

Update on reopening churches for private prayer and public worship

Permission was given for the reopening of churches for private prayer. This permission was coupled with the need to complete a Risk Assessment and to meet some fairly rigorous standards for instance in relation to cleaning, hygiene and social distancing. Not all of the Camelot churches have the resources at present to comply with these standards, especially the need for regular and thorough cleaning.

However, a number of churches across the Group are now open for private prayer as follows:-

Sunday morning

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am.

South Cadbury open from 10 am to 12 noon

North Cadbury open from 10.30 am to 12 noon

Monday afternoon

Galhampton open from 4 pm to 5 pm

Wednesday afternoon

North Cadbury, open from 2.30 pm to 4 pm

Friday afternoon

Galhampton open from 10 am to 11 am

There has also been a further government announcement that as from Sunday 5th July it will be possible also for public worship to take place. This, however, is again conditional on detailed guidance to be issued by the government. It is anticipated that this guidance will be available from the middle of next week following which it will be possible to make detailed plans in this respect.

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ and for the grace to ask that God's will be done in all circumstances
- For Camelot churches in responding to the reopening for private prayer and public worship
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing
- Health and wellbeing of Felicity, Arabella and Robert, members of the extended Mileham family
- Prayers for parents, teachers, governors and children of North Cadbury Church of England Primary School as the school is partially reopened, prayers also for Horsington School
- Funerals needing to take place under new restrictions with only family mourners
- For those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- For contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Anna's ordination

Before the lockdown Anna's ordination as priest was scheduled to take place yesterday (27th June) at Wells Cathedral. She would then have presided at her first Communion at a Group service today (28th June). Because of the lockdown clearly neither of these services can take place. Some form of ordination service is scheduled to take place in September but at present details of this are still being worked out and these depend on the extent to

which lockdown has been eased by then.

Update on North Cadbury Church of England Primary School

In accordance with government guidelines selected classes have returned to North Cadbury Church of England Primary School from the beginning of this week until the summer holidays in July.

Excalibur and the Parish 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, and will include Camelot People giving details of occasional offices in the benefice (this for the moment is confined to funerals during the suspension of both weddings and baptisms). The July Excalibur is now online and can be downloaded from the homepage of the website.

The Parish 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.

Church of England Daily Hopeline

The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a new telephone service, 'Daily Hopeline'. If you ring the free number 0800 804 8044 you can hear a recorded message and can also listen to well-known hymns along with prayers and a reflection based on a hymn.

Premier Radio

Available from Premier Radio (DAB radio and channel 725 via Freeview TV) Sunday morning of sacred music, songs and teaching etc, 7.00am-12.00 noon. Includes 'Hearts and Hymns' by Pam Rhodes, 8.00 to 10.00am with great variety of hymns and accompanying information.

Bible studies on weekday mornings.

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)