

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 35

Sunday 4th July 2020

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

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot this Sunday. The scripture passage for this Sunday concludes with Jesus’ words on how we can find rest in Him. Ron reflects on this in the light of all the complex procedures that we are all trying to grapple with as the coronavirus lockdown eases.

This edition also includes an update on the reopening of churches for public worship.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the

Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Reflection

Rules! Haven't we got a lot? How many people can you see, where, and for how long? Where can you travel, and for what purpose? Somehow it was easier a few weeks ago, when at least we all knew where we stood. Which was on our doorsteps, clapping. Now they keep changing the rules, and somehow, easing things up makes it more complicated, not simpler.

Somebody said rules are to be obeyed, recommendations are optional, and advice you can take or leave. The government never seems to make it clear which is which, and there is much confusion. Is there a Plan, or are they making it up as they go along? You decide.

The Jews never had that problem. They had The Law.

They still do. A while back there was a devout old Jewish couple living in a nice block of flats an easy stroll from their local synagogue. Then the owners of the block made an energy-saving improvement. They made the landing lights motion sensitive - the lights only came on when someone came out of their flat. Now the Jewish Law is very strict about what you can and can't do on the Sabbath. And one of the don'ts is Kindling a Fire. And this couple realised that the tiny spark in the automatic switch was, strictly speaking, a fire, and just stepping out of their flat made it happen, so they felt they were trapped in their flat, and couldn't get to synagogue on the Sabbath without breaking the Law.

The Pharisees in Jesus's time were sticklers for the Law. Under Roman rule, it was all they had left. If they ate pork like the Gentiles, or wore clothes made of mixed fibres, who were they? That was their identity - they were the people who kept the Law - God's Law. And they looked down on good Jewish people who maybe didn't have the leisure to devote their whole lives just to keeping the rules. Because the Law was God's gift to his people. Or was it?

Like the couple in their flat, a lot of people found the Law not so much a gift, as a burden. Especially as there were people who had ways of getting round it. The Law said you couldn't travel more than a certain distance from your own property on the Sabbath. So what if I want to visit my friends who live further away than that? I know! I'll take this old sandal, or this broken pot, and put it here by this rock at the roadside. It's My Property! So I can go and see my friends, and still not be further away from my property than the Law allows. There's nothing like someone breaking the rules for making everyone else feel resentful about keeping them.

And it isn't just the Jews. A lot of Christians, especially during Lent (remember Lent? I don't remember seeing the end of it!) take some of the Church's recommendations and advice, and interpret them as rules. And breaking these rules, they think, is Sin. So having a chocolate in Lent is a sin. Shopping on Sunday is a sin. You can probably think of more.

Like going to church on Sunday. I can't wait to see you all on a Sunday, share worship with you, sing with you, have coffee with you. There's even some of you I'd quite like to hug. But I can't. There are people who would say skipping church is a sin, although nowhere in the Bible does it say Sabbath worship was, or is compulsory. It's a joy. It's fun. But it shouldn't be a burden.

Jesus had a different approach. *Come to me*, he says, *if you're burdened and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest*. In other words, never mind all that stuff about how much blue fringe you must have on your ephod, or whether you can eat a prawn: love God with your whole being. Love your neighbour as yourself. How easy is that? That was a trick question. It isn't easy at all. But it's a sight easier to understand than all that stuff in Leviticus!

If we find the rules on Covid 19 confusing, just remember this. *Take care and be sensible*. And Jesus' take on the Jewish Law in all its complexity was *For Goodness sake! God doesn't care if you eat a bacon sandwich or wear a woolly sweater with your denim jeans! Just love God, and love your neighbour!*

Ron

Hymn Suggestion

Two hymns which speak of coming to Jesus and finding rest in Him are 'Be still for the presence of the Lord' and 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind.'

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ and find true rest in Him
- For all of us as we respond to the easing of the lockdown and try to find sensible and responsible ways through complex regulations
- 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
- 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
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Update on reopening churches for public worship

As from this Sunday it is possible for public worship to take place. Detailed guidance in this respect was issued by the Government, Church and Diocese over the course of the past week. Tristram has briefed the Ministry Team and churchwardens with the essential points arising from this guidance with a view to formulating a plan for the reopening of Camelot churches for public worship. The likelihood is that there will be a phased return to public worship over the next couple of months or so. It is appreciated that our community includes a number of vulnerable people and that not all will feel safe in returning to public worship at this stage. For this reason, Cutting Edge Camelot will continue for the immediate future. Further updates will be given in future editions of Cutting Edge Camelot.

Reopening churches for private prayer

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 9.30am to 10.30am.

South Cadbury open from 10.00am to 12 noon

North Cadbury open from 10.30am to 12 noon

Monday afternoon

Galhampton open from 4.00pm to 5.00pm

Wednesday afternoon

North Cadbury, open from 2.30pm to 4.00pm

Friday afternoon

Galhampton open from 10.00am to 11.00am

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 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)