

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 57

Sunday 4th October 2020

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

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. The passages and reflection below focus on the significance of Anna’s ordination as a priest. This took place on Tuesday in Wells. The service at North Cadbury this morning will follow this theme and will be the first one at which Anna will preside at Communion.

Scripture Passages

1 Peter 2: 9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

John 21: 13-22

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.”

(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.)
After this he said to him, “Follow me.””

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?”

Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!”

Reflection

In a small service in Wells on Tuesday, Anna was ordained as priest. Today Anna will preside for the first time at Communion. The above Bible passages have been chosen to help us to reflect on the meaning of Anna’s ordination.

They help us ask ‘Who is a priest and what is priesthood?’ Many different answers to this question have been given over the ages.

But a simple starting point is to ask whether priesthood belongs to people like myself, Anna, Alison and Ron, a kind of special personal possession? Hopefully, we would all give an emphatic no to this question.

But why? The ordination service at Wells (as with all ordination services) begins with a very clear statement that priesthood belongs to all of us, to the whole of the church.

‘God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’

These words are drawn from our first reading from the first letter of Peter:
But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

It is the people of God as a whole, not any one individual, who are to be the royal priesthood.

And what is at the centre of this priestly vocation as the people of God? Peter’s letter tells us that proclamation and praise are central. And this proclamation and praise focusses on God’s redeeming power, the journey from darkness to light.

The contrast between darkness and light is a powerful image. Recently I purchased an electric car. It’s all very new and exciting, no more visits to petrol filling stations, you simply open a nozzle on the front and insert a cable from the mains electricity to charge the battery. And at about ten o’clock at night I remembered that I needed to stop the car charging. However, it was dark and in the darkness I forgot and did not see that I needed to shut the nozzle again as well as disconnecting the electricity supply. So the nozzle was left open in the rain all night (fortunately there

was no damage). But when light came in the morning it revealed that the nozzle was open and it gave me a chance to put this right.

Although this is an example about physical light, Jesus has come to give us spiritual and moral light. But the damage revealed by this light is even more important. Jesus' light shows us the workings of spiritual and moral darkness within and around us and it gives us the power and opportunity to live in a new and wholesome way.

But if priesthood belongs to the church as a whole, why the need for any individual priests? The ordination service explains it in this way, 'To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries. Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel.'

So the individual priest serves the priesthood of the whole church. And in his or her ministry proclamation and praise is once again central.

So individual priests such as Anna represent the priesthood of the whole church. They accentuate and bring out that special vocation which we all have as God's people to display God to the world around us, to be people of praise and proclamation, worship and thanksgiving.

Moving on to the gospel, I looked for a passage which might in a different way express the essence of the priestly vocation. I thought about Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi and then again about the choosing and sending out of the twelve apostles. I thought also about the authority given to Anna in public ministry from now on to pronounce both absolution and blessing. All of those are indeed important and worth reflecting upon.

However, I decided that in the end what makes a priest a priest is not anything they might do, however important this might be, but it is a question of who they are in their inner character.

And so the gospel reading is one which comes after Jesus' resurrection. It comes after Peter has known the deepest kind of failure. Just before the crucifixion he has denied that he has ever known Jesus. His faith has been tested at this crucial point and it has been found wanting. He has nowhere to hide. Or does he? Perhaps in returning to his earlier career as a fisherman he is trying to find a hiding place. Maybe he thinks that at least here he can find something useful and valuable to do. And yet Peter's future career and ministry is not as a fisherman but as a shepherd of God's sheep. It is for this ministry that Jesus needs to prepare him.

And so Jesus needs to enable Peter to face his place of failure full on. He leads him back in his memory to that time when he failed Jesus. Just as Peter three times denied that he ever knew Jesus so now three times Jesus gives Peter to opportunity to affirm his love for Jesus.

But this time Peter's confession is not accompanied by any of the earlier bravado and self-confidence, oh, I'll do anything for you, others may betray you but I won't. No, all that he is asked is simply whether or not he loves Jesus. And he is asked this question three times. This goes to the heart of who Peter really is. It is not success or failure which truly matters however we may understand these terms. No what matters is simply this confession of love for Jesus. It is on this foundation that Peter's future ministry will be built.

And so the question of whether Peter loves Jesus is accompanied by the charge to Peter to feed God's sheep. This is a role of leadership in the church, pastor, elder or priest, whatever name we choose to give it. It is a spiritual feeding of God's people through teaching and prayer. And yet it is only out of a continuing and growing relationship of love with Jesus that Peter will be able to fulfil this pastoral charge. Through his past failure and his subsequent reinstatement by Jesus, Peter has learnt that it is by God's strength rather than his own that he will feed God's sheep.

To return once more to the words of the ordination service ‘You cannot bear the weight of this calling in your own strength, but only by the grace and power of God.’

So in Anna’s priestly ministry, in the ministry of any priest, in all of our ministries as we form part of the priestly people of God the one thing that is essential, the one thing from which all else flows is that we love and grow in our love for Jesus.

Tristram

Hymn Suggestion

The hymns chosen by Anna for this Sunday’ service at North Cadbury are ‘Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart’, ‘Be still for the presence of the Lord’ and ‘O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder’.

Points for Prayers

- For Anna’s future ministry as priest and for all of us to love and grow in our love for Jesus
- For further services in the Group this month
- 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 and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- Preparations to avert or minimise a second wave of coronavirus
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)

- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school as they proceed with their new school year
- 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.

Services of public worship in October

Please see the following schedule of forthcoming services of public worship. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Any further additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

Sunday 4th October

9.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Communion

10.30 am, St John the Baptist, North Cheriton, Morning Worship

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Group Communion (Anna to preside)

Sunday 11th October

9.30 am, Galhampton, Communion

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion

(Anna will preside)

9.30 am, St Michael's Blackford, Matins

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Harvest Service

11.00 am, St Nicholas Holton, Harvest Service

Sunday 18th October

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Peter and St Paul Maperton, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Sunday Worship

6.30 pm, St Mary's Yarlington, Evensong

Sunday 25th October (clocks go back)

8.00 am, St Michael's Blackford, Communion (Anna will preside)

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Matins

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Sunday Worship

11.00 am, St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, Harvest Service

3.00 pm, St Nicholas Bratton Seymour, Harvest Service

4.00 pm, Galhampton, Evening Service

St Nicholas Bratton Seymour

A Risk Assessment for St Nicholas Bratton Seymour has now been completed and the first service to be held there following lockdown will be the Harvest Service on 25th October at 3.00 pm. All Camelot churches will then have returned to public worship following lockdown.

Reopening churches for private prayer

North Cadbury and Galhampton churches are normally open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons. North Cadbury is open from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm and Galhampton from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm followed by Celtic Worship led by Alison at 7.00 pm.

Online service to remember deaths during the pandemic

In collaboration with Wells Cathedral, the diocese has offered an online service led by Bishop Ruth and the Dean of Wells to remember all those who have died during the Covid pandemic.

The service is now available to watch

at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cLpBxmoapQ&feature=emb_logo

Excalibur and the Parish Office

Because of concerns relating to the hand delivery of parish magazines (see official Church of England guidance on this point) an electronic rather than a printed version of Excalibur will be continue to be produced for the time being. This will be available on the website, www.camelotparishes.co.uk, and will include Camelot People giving details of occasional offices in the benefice. The October Excalibur is now available on the website.

The Parish Office is closed although Rob does come in regularly. In his absence please contact Rob via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Update on Bishop Peter

Bishop Peter thanks everyone for all the cards and other expressions of support which he has received. A card was sent to him on behalf of the Camelot Parishes as a whole. He says that he has been lifted on 'eagle's

wings' through the love and prayers of others and he thinks that the treatment for leukaemia is going well. He is grateful that potential donors for a bone marrow transplant have been identified and he is preparing for such a transplant later this year. Please continue to pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

Anna's ordination as priest

Congratulations to our curate Anna who was ordained as priest on Tuesday 29th September at St Cuthbert's Wells by Bishop Ruth.

Anna will preside at Communion for the first time at 11.00 am on Sunday 4th October at St Michael's North Cadbury. We hope that those who usually attend this service will do so. We know that there will be others of you who will wish to support Anna in her new role. So, the rota will enable Anna to preside at Communions in as many of the Camelot churches as possible in the month following her priesting.

Here is a message and photograph from Anna concerning her ordination.

A message from Anna

Thank you so much to everyone who sent me good wishes, and let me know they were thinking of me and praying for me on Tuesday evening. It may have been a small service, but it was very special and full of joy.

Here is a photo of Tristram and I taken after the service.



I very much look forward to seeing many of you around the benefice in the coming weeks as we celebrate communion together.

With love,

Anna

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)