

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 90

Ash Wednesday 17th February 2021

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

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. We continue our series on the Beatitudes. Ron reflects below on ‘Blessed are the meek’.

Today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Among other things, Lent is a special time for us to remember and to be generous to those in need. We have been publicising ways in which we can give to local causes such as The Lord’s Larder and the school in North Cadbury. These causes continue to need our support.

However, in Lent we would like particularly to ask for your support for the Kisumu Children Trust in Kenya. The Camelot Group has supported this charity in previous Lents. Further information about Kisumu is given in this edition.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 5: 1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Reflection

Blessed are the meek, for they inherit the earth.

In the very last episode of *Dad's Army*, Sergeant Wilson is best man at Corporal Jones’ wedding. He wears his old army uniform, from the First World War. Captain Mainwaring, bumptious as ever, looks at him, and notices the three pips. “You never told me you were a captain,” he says. “Well, sir, you never asked.” All through the series, Wilson has been the faithful sergeant. Instead of shouting “Attention!” he would say, “Would you mind awfully standing to attention?” He is meekness personified.

Right at the beginning, when Mainwaring, on no authority at all, assumes command of the home Guard unit, Wilson might have protested. But he never did. Do we admire him for that, or do we have him down as not only meek, but well, a bit wet?

Meekness isn’t really a quality we admire. It could be a cover for real weakness, and is often mistaken for that. Subservience has about it the

smack of Dickens' odious Uriah Heep, whose pretence at being 'umble covers unpleasant greed and ambition. Whether meekness can be an admirable quality depends on who we are subservient to.

The very word, *Islam* means submission. The good Muslim is entirely at the disposal of God. No personal ambition or desire takes precedence over obedience to the will of God, and it is this submission which will be rewarded in paradise. Muslims, whatever they do, seek to glorify God, and the fact that some have distorted ideas about what God wants, doesn't detract from the goodness of the great majority.

Jesus is our model of meekness. Paul tells the Philippians that Jesus is equal to God, but never traded on that. He humbled himself to become a man like us, and was obedient to God in all things, up to and including an agonising death. He used his power only for good, never ostentatiously, and tried (usually unsuccessfully) to discourage people from proclaiming him as Messiah, or any other title that might have been misunderstood. One of my favourite modern worship songs is *Meekness and Majesty*, which spells out the difference between what Jesus, the Son of God, could have done, and what he actually did: *Lord of eternity dwells in humanity, kneels in humility and washes our feet.*

So if we are to be meek, it doesn't necessarily mean subservient to other people, but to God. A fortnight ago, on a wet Saturday, I watched Ingrid Bergman (33) as Joan of Arc (19). Joan stood up to France's enemies, the weak government of France, and the corruption of her own church, because she was obedient and submissive to the word of God as she believed it was revealed to her. The great prophets of the Old Testament stood up to kings, pointed out their shortcomings, told them when they were downright wicked, because they were obedient to God, a greater authority than any ruler.

I accept I'm guilty of preaching grace above all things - that our sins are

forgiven so we can just get on with loving God and loving other people without guilt and sin getting in the way. But the other aspect of our Christian faith has to be meekness and obedience. Today is Ash Wednesday. The beginning of Lent. Some of us, in different times, would have accepted a sooty mark of a cross on our foreheads, a sign of repentance, and submission. For the next six weeks, as we prepare for whatever Easter we'll be allowed this year, let's think about what God's will for us might be. What form will our meekness, our submission to God's will, actually take?

Think about that while we look at the second part of Jesus' saying. "Blessed are the meek," he says, "for they shall inherit the earth." Really? When he was saying that, the Romans were inheriting the earth, and not by being meek. They were doing it by being assertive - assertive with legions of heavily armed troops, and here's Jesus going completely counter to that. This powerful regime might subdue nations, squash any opposition and despise the meek and the weak (It couldn't tell the difference), but Jesus takes the long view. Empires pass, and fall. What lasts is goodness, compassion and love. Even the Romans came to see that that man on the hill over there, speaking to the crowds, might have had a point.

Ron

Vimeo

We will be recording and uploading a Vimeo service for next Sunday drawing on the assistance and technical expertise of Dan Gruner and his colleagues.

The Big Church Read

The Big Church Read is a great opportunity to bring Christians together across the country to read books together. It contains online videos, reading plans and discussion questions to enhance the reading experience. The current book chosen for reading and discussion is *Singing in Babylon*:

Finding purpose in life's second choices by Jeff Lucas. For more information please see:- <https://thebigchurchread.co.uk/>

Giving in Lent

The Kisumu Children Trust is a charity for children in Kenya. The Camelot Group has supported this charity in previous Lents and we would like to do so once again in this Lent.

Our parishioners in Galhampton, Mike and Katherine Dare, have been trustees and actively involved with Kisumu for a number of years. They write as follows:-

‘2020 has been a challenging year for Kisumu Children, as with all charities, and of course for our churches across Camelot, though thankfully Kenya has thus far been saved from the extreme ravages caused by Covid-19. In addition, an initiative sponsored by UNICEF and the Kenyan Government is requiring us to redirect the Christian love, care and witness we provide in our children’s home towards continuing to support the children in this way but in their own rural homes or with extended families rather than in our home. This will be a real challenge for our ministry over the coming years and may well see us working more closely with local churches in Kisumu and the local school. We hope too to be able to facilitate a link between the local school there and the North Cadbury school here, which we know Lisa would like to achieve, once Covid pressures have reduced.’

If you wish to give an online donation the BACS details are: The Kisumu Children Trust; Sort Code 40-52-40; Account no. 00011583. The charity banks with CAF Bank. Could you please include the reference “Camelot” on donations made by BACS. Gift Aid authorisations can also be provided for completion if requested.

Please make cheques payable to Kisumu Children and send them to:-
Kisumu Children Trust, The Old Post Office, 1, Thorpe Avenue, Tonbridge,
TN10 4PW.

Supporting our community

The Lord's Larder

The Lord's Larder is one of our local foodbanks based in Yeovil. In many of our villages we have central collection points for food to be taken to the Lord's Larder and to other local foodbanks. They are immensely appreciative of the support and of food which is given in this way.

However, they also need financial contributions so that they can buy additional food as needed. If you would like to contribute in this way you can do so by setting up a Standing Order in favour of the Yeovil Christian Support Trust. Their bank details are Unity Trust Bank Plc, Birmingham, Sort Code 60-83-01, Account No 20211112. It is possible to increase the value of these donations by claiming Gift Aid.

North Cadbury Church of England Primary School

The school also immensely appreciates our prayers and support in this difficult period. While prayer remains primary, some of us may be wondering whether we can also help in practical ways. The need for all families connected with the school to be able to buy books for use at home is very pressing in this time of home schooling.

So the school would appreciate donations of book tokens or gift vouchers for this purpose. If you wish to make a donation direct by BACS transfer the School's details are:-

Account Name:- North Cadbury Church of England Primary

Sort Code:- 30-99-98

Account No:- 65255268

Please use the reference 'Lockdown Books'.

On the other hand, you may wish to send any donations to the Parish Office marking any envelopes 'For the School'. They can then be passed on promptly to the school.

If anyone would like to donate to the school some pre-owned books these will also be gratefully received. However, these will need to be of good quality and less than ten years old.

Points for Prayers

- That we will be given the grace we need to know and submit to God's will for our lives
- The restrictions of the third lockdown and sustaining our common life in this time
- Give thanks for progress in the roll out of the different vaccines in combating coronavirus and for the falling rates of infection
- The need for wisdom in the timing of any easing of restrictions
- 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
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and other local schools as they are unable to open fully at the moment
- 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.

Suspension of services

Services across the Camelot Group have now been suspended as sadly we concluded that it was not possible to hold them safely in the current circumstances. The suspension of services will be kept under review as circumstances change.

Excalibur

The February edition of Excalibur is now online at camelotparishes.co.uk

The Parish Office

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.

An inclusive Communion celebrated on behalf of the benefice

During the third lockdown as in the others Ron and Pam will be celebrating Communion regularly in their home each Sunday at 10.00 am. 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.

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. He has now received a stem cell transplant. Please pray for the new cells to 'do their bit' and for his continued healing. 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.

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)