

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 100

Palm Sunday 28th March 2021

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

Welcome

Welcome to this edition of Cutting Edge Camelot on Palm Sunday.

Scripture Passage

Luke 19: 29-40

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.”

³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.”

⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Reflection

Back in those days, a king who conquered a city was expected to ride into it, to claim it as his own. And he'd ride in on a horse, a charger, exactly the way Jesus didn't. Famously, we have a king who rides a donkey. Jesus had no interest in military conquest. So he rode a donkey, a visual symbol that he knew a better way to bring God's kingdom than by fighting. Jesus is the Son of God, so he could have forced people to obey him if he'd wanted to. And he had been tempted to, as we heard at the beginning of Lent, a month ago. But forced obedience, without love, isn't true obedience. Way back, God had said to Jeremiah that he wanted to get the law off slabs of stone, and into our hearts. That way, we obey, not because it says so, but because we want to. Like the speed limit. Do you keep your speed down because there's a camera, or because you see it's sensible to keep below thirty going through the village? God doesn't force us to obey him. Neither would Jesus. He was too humble to claim the privileges of being God. So he rode on a donkey, and the people welcomed him. A few at first, and it grew. Not because of anything Jesus had said or done that day, and certainly not because he'd deliberately whipped them up - it happened spontaneously. But it was a touch-and-go situation - the cheering crowd could easily have turned nasty, when they discovered that he wasn't going to lead a revolt. Crowds are strange things. We know that in less than a week, a crowd - maybe some of these same people, would be baying for Jesus' death. What happened in between?

He went to the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, to show that money can't bring in God's kingdom. It's still one of the problems you can't solve by chucking money at it. Then he was in the temple every day, teaching the people that the only way to victory is the way of love. That means sticking to your principles, and if necessary, submitting to whatever your enemies do to you, rather than use violence to resist them.

Then Jesus had supper with his friends, one last time. He told them how he wanted to be remembered, in the fellowship of bread and wine- simple food shared. He warned them to expect the worst.

Then he led them down to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and asked them to leave him alone while he wrestled with his conscience. It wasn't an easy struggle - he was sweating buckets before he'd finished. Like most moral questions, it wasn't an easy one to resolve. There were no black and white certainties. Don't forget, Jesus was human, and he'd deliberately put aside the knowledge of the future that could have been his as the Son of God. He'd chosen to be one of us, and just like us, he hoped for the best and feared the worst. He really didn't know what to do for the best. That's the cost of being human. I was so pleased when Archbishop Rowan was asked, *how do you know there's a God?* And he answered, *I don't know, I just believe.* Because that's me, too, and you, maybe. I don't know, but I believe. And Jesus under the olive trees, in the dark, faced the certainty of a horrible death, but without the certainty of anything after. Only his *trust* in his Father's love and goodness. And he believed that surrendering to death, somehow, was the right thing, and what God wanted him to do. But he didn't *know*. He only believed.

Here's the problem. Should he face up to his enemies and resist them when they came for him? Should he run away and hide? Or should he submit, and let them do their worst?

To resist would have brought the whole nation to arms - those who supported him, against those who wanted him dead, and all against the Romans, who would fall on the rebel province. People would be killed - some in the revolution, some as examples afterwards. There would be widows and orphans. And what if they'd won? If Jesus eventually became a victorious king, it would be at such a cost that he'd be further than ever from persuading people to live by love.

We read about the Spanish conquests of South America, of Cortez and Pizarro, bringing Christianity at sword-point. How could they proclaim Jesus, loving and forgiving, to the remnants of a people they'd all but wiped out? I'm really surprised there's any Christians in South America at all.

Secondly, should Jesus have run away? Peter had suggested, a few weeks back, not going to Jerusalem in the first place, and now they were here, it still wasn't too late. It was dark. But nobody could say the things he'd said about people with power and get away with it for long. They'd find him eventually. It would only postpone the evil day. Besides, who'd believe in a preacher of universal love and non-violence, if he wasn't prepared to put it into practice and face the consequences?

Jesus could only see the third choice open to him: to submit to certain death without putting up any resistance. That way, maybe a few people might be convinced that the only way to victory is the way of love and self-sacrifice. If they believed him, and tried to live their own lives on the same principles, then a movement might just possibly start, and grow. It seems unlikely that it will ever be very large, considering the demands it makes. Because Jesus was human. He didn't know for sure this way would work. And he didn't want to die. Nobody does. *Drinking the cup* seems to have been a common expression - Jesus asked his disciples whether they could drink the cup he'd have to drink, like we'd say, taking your medicine. So Jesus prayed, in an agony of fear that he would have to suffer one of the most painful deaths ever invented. He wasn't play-acting. Eventually, after a long struggle, he won through, and accepted that *not my will, but yours, be done*.

To do Holy Week properly, we have to put ourselves in the position of not knowing the ending. Try to put thoughts of Easter aside for a few days, and go with one day at a time. If we follow the events of Holy Week alongside Jesus, remembering that he's human, and tempted just like us, then on Friday we'll find out the consequences of his choice. But not until Sunday

will we know whether the way of self-sacrifice was right for him. If so, it must be the right way for us to live victoriously, too.

Ron

Points for Prayers

- What it means to follow Jesus and His way of self-sacrificial love
- Our plans for Easter and the different ways in which we can share our faith over the Easter period
- 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
- Bishop Peter in his decision to take early retirement and Bishop Ruth as she continues to shoulder additional responsibilities in the diocese
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and other local schools as they prepare to celebrate Easter in a way that conveys its message to all under their care
- For the work of Kisumu Children Trust
- Prayers for those who are lonely or housebound and for those who may be doing all right but who are really missing everyday social interaction in shops, the street or over the garden fence
- 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.
- Those facing illnesses of all kinds and those whom we know who have recently been bereaved.

Vimeo Recording

This week's service is available on Vimeo. The link is:-

<https://vimeo.com/529884023>

Hymns

The hymns in the service are 'Hosanna to the Son of David', 'My song is love unknown', 'Ride on, ride on in majesty' and 'All glory, laud and honour'.

Easter Services

There is good news to report as congregational singing will now be permitted for those services which are taking place outdoors in the churchyard.

However, the position remains unchanged for services inside the church. Here congregational singing is not permitted.

The rule on outdoor gatherings is due to be relaxed as from tomorrow in order once more to allow groups of up to six people to meet outside. This makes it much more feasible to hold services again although we need to remember that the rule on not socialising inside church buildings will remain unchanged.

In the meantime, however, it has been possible to plan for some Easter services across the Camelot Group as follows:-

9.30 am St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Easter Celebration

9.30 am St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Communion

9.30 am St Michael's Blackford, Morning Service

9.30 am St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, Communion

11.00 am St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion

(N.B. This service is a parish one i.e. including Galhampton)

11.00 am St Nicholas Holton, Morning Service

4.00 pm St Mary's Yarlinton, Easter Service

If there is not a service in your own parish you are welcome to attend services in other parishes across the Group but please do let the churchwardens know so that they can preserve the appropriate social distancing.

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.

Services after Easter

The suspension of services is being reviewed. North Cadbury PCC have decided to resume holding one service in the parish (either at North Cadbury or Galhampton) each Sunday after Easter. Further details of this will be given in the next midweek Cutting Edge Camelot and any other plans will follow in due course.

Excalibur

The March 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.

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)