

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 105

Sunday 18th April 2021

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. We include special prayers for the Royal Family and for Prince Philip at this sad time as well as our reflection on this Sunday's scripture passage.

Scripture Passage

Luke 24: 36-48

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

³⁷ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.”

Reflection

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you. ³⁷ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost.

Peace and fear seem very relevant to our circumstances today. Fear clearly in what we have been living with day by day in terms of the coronavirus pandemic.

But in more recent news also peace. In commenting on Prince Philip’s death his daughter in law the Countess of Wessex recounted the peacefulness describing it ‘as if somebody took him by the hand and off he went’.

Peace and fear are also foremost among the emotions experienced by Jesus’ disciples after His death.

Fear because as the risen Jesus appears without warning, this is quite natural. People don’t rise from the dead do they? Are we seeing a ghost? And fear also because they were afraid of being caught in the backlash against anyone who was known to be a follower of Jesus. The type of fear that led Peter three times to deny that he knew Jesus.

And into this fear Jesus speaks peace. It is a greeting which recalls other greetings of peace from Jesus to His disciples at times of great turbulence and anxiety such as the Last Supper.

Fear or peace, it seems a very stark and binary choice. Which do we choose to live in?

Perhaps one of our most primal fears relates to death and what it means, what and whether anything comes after it.

The death of Prince Philip after such a long life, someone we have imagined might be there for ever, just part of the furniture of national life can focus such fears and thoughts. Into these fears we need to hear Jesus speak His words of peace.

And perhaps also it causes us to ask ourselves what we can know about the nature of the Resurrection and the afterlife. A Christian Professor told a story of how as a young man he had been taken into hospital and told that he had 50:50 chance of surviving for a day. He was a Christian believer certainly and yet he was terrified. This sparked off a spiritual journey of enquiry and finding out as much as he possibly could about the Resurrection.

We can only have clues as to what the Resurrection and the life to come will be like. But the best clues are to be found in studying the nature of Jesus' appearances in the forty-day period after His Resurrection but before His ascension into heaven.

Perhaps we often think of God as being ethereal. There is a certain amount of truth for God is indeed spirit. We learn, for instance in John's gospel that *'God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'* (John 4:24).

And yet for all that Jesus does not appear after His resurrection as a disembodied, ethereal spirit. On the contrary He is at pains to stress and to show the bodily nature of His resurrection. He is not just a comforting presence.

*³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”
⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.*

He addresses the fears and doubts of His disciples by direct questions. Why are you afraid? Why do you doubt?

He invites His disciples to touch Him. He has flesh and bones, He is not like a ghost. Resurrection life is not some pale and unsatisfying shadow of real life. And the invitation for His disciples to touch Him is accompanied by His showing them their hands and feet.

⁴¹ While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

And then Jesus goes beyond even a simple invitation to touch Him and showing them His hands and feet. The disciples are still disbelieving and wondering. More is needed.

And so He asks them a question about whether there is anything to eat. They produce a piece of broiled fish and He eats it. This is clearly an actual rather than a symbolic action (after all why else would you include the detail that the fish was broiled, this adds nothing in symbolic terms). However, this action does demonstrate the tangible reality of Jesus' risen life.

We are as a nation mourning the loss of Prince Philip. It is a time of national significance. And yet there is a personal element to it. He could be described as the nation's grandfather. And so his death is personal and brings home the reality of loss in a way that looking at these terrible graphs and statistics of deaths from coronavirus, for instance learning that worldwide deaths have now passed the level of three million perhaps cannot.

And yet for us we know it is not truly personal in the way that the loss of a member of our own family is and would be. When we listen to members of the Royal Family last week, we remember that, yes, they are national figures, but also that they are a family like any other, simply grieving and trying to make sense of life and of death. And so we pray for and respect them but at the same time we are not grieving in that same direct way. I cannot claim even to have met Prince Philip other than through the medium of television although others may have done.

Television is, of course, encounter at a disembodied distance while what we need is the immediacy of personal encounter. We are reminded in our gospel account of the importance and centrality of the embodied life. And the Apostles' Creed tells us 'I believe in...the resurrection of the body' not the immortality of the soul.

Of course such a belief raises all kinds of questions. Does resurrection depend on what mortal remains are left of someone? What about cremation, what about burial, what about those who have been blown up at sea into countless fragments? And do we want the body that towards the end of life has been wracked and devastated with pain to be resurrected or do we want the one that we may think represents our best self, the body of the prime of our life?

I do not have the answer to these questions and in specific terms I do not think the Bible gives us such answers. However, what it does tell us about are the appearances of Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection. From them we learn that Resurrection life will be the same but different. On the one hand Jesus is able to move through locked doors. On the other He is able to eat broiled fish. And beyond that we simply have to trust in God. Prince Philip's death is described as a peaceful one, it was 'as if somebody took him by the hand and off he went'. And in the end for all the agony that preceded it Jesus' death was also peaceful with those final words of "*Father,*

into your hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46). This is a prayer that in His day children would say each day before going to sleep.

It is also a prayer of faith and of trust that we might pray in these times of fear when we need to hear Jesus’ message of peace, “*Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.*”

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- To receive Jesus’ peace in a time of fear
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes and prayers for those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Wisdom and sensitivity to others as the lockdown restrictions continue to ease
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and other local schools in their preparations for next term
- 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.

Special prayers for Prince Philip and the Royal Family

God of our lives,
we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip, for the love he shared among us,
and for his devotion to duty.

We entrust him now to your love and mercy,
through our Redeemer Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Merciful God, be close to all who mourn,
especially The Queen and all members of the Royal Family.
May they know the hope of your promises
and the comfort of your
love, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip,
founder of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
We remember his vision and imagination,
his interest in young people and his support for them.
Inspire us with the same commitment
to serve friend, neighbour, and stranger alike,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn

One hymn used at Prince Philip's funeral is 'Eternal Father, strong to save'.
This reflects the theme of trusting in God and also Prince Philip's naval
experience.

Congregational Singing

Congregational singing is now 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 has been relaxed in order to allow groups of up to six people to meet outside. The rule on not socialising inside church buildings remains unchanged.

Services in April

Forthcoming services are:-

Sunday 18th April 9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot

Sunday 18th April 11 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury

Sunday 18th April 6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington

Sunday 25th April 11 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington

Sunday 25th April 6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton

Please note that North Cadbury and Galhampton are holding joint services for the time being.

Excalibur

The April 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)