

# CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 106

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021

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

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

## **Scripture Passages**

*Psalm 23*

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil; for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff -- they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

*John 10: 11-18*

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away -- and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup> “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

## **Reflection**

We often need to make tough decisions at the moment. What about all the limits on social contact which, though relaxed, are still very much with us? We still have to keep our distance and cannot mix freely indoors. This feels so unnatural and yet we appreciate the reason for such rules.

And when life is tough the need for tenderness is highlighted. Perhaps, like me, you were struck by the picture of the Queen seated by all herself at Prince Philip’s funeral. It is a poignant image and one which probably resonates with many families who have had to mourn over the past year against the backdrop of many restrictions. But it also reminded us of the common humanity of what was, after all, a State occasion and of the need for tenderness.

In our readings this morning, Psalm 23 and the Good Shepherd we are reminded first of all that the shepherd’s vocation was a demanding and dangerous one which calls for a toughness of character.

<sup>4</sup> *“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff -- they comfort me.”*

The darkest valley or the valley of the shadow of death is a place where firm guidance and protection is needed in the face of threatening conditions. And this is what the shepherd’s rod and staff provided.

<sup>11</sup> *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away -- and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.”*

And in our passage from John’s gospel Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd. The risks that He is willing to run for us extend to the ultimate sacrifice, that of laying down His life for us. Jesus does not run away like the hired hand does at the first sign of danger, the approach of the wolf. Rather He stands His ground in order to protect His flock even at the expense of His own life.

Being a shepherd is not an occupation for the timid or the cowards.

And yet at the same time there is a tender, gentle and quiet side to the shepherd’s work.

<sup>2</sup> *“He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;”*  
In Psalm 23 we have the beautiful pastoral image of the shepherd leading His flock into green pastures and beside still waters. This may resonate much more with what we conventionally expect from the shepherd.

<sup>5</sup> *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”*

Later on in the Psalm the imagery changes from the shepherd and pastoral life to a feast where there is abundant provision. God is indeed a generous God.

<sup>6</sup> *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.”*

And the Psalm ends on a comforting note which stresses the security of dwelling with God and of goodness and mercy following us.

<sup>14</sup> *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,”*  
And in the Good Shepherd discourse we learn of the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus knows His own and they know Him. This is a deep and intimate relationship of love with Jesus.

*“He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.” (John 10: 3-4)*

Such a depth of personal relationship is portrayed earlier in the discourse where the sheep hear and recognise the voice of the shepherd. They are not driven from behind but rather called by the shepherd from in front.

So the shepherd combines both toughness and tenderness. Both are needed.

In the world in which we live we are often confronted with the need to make difficult decisions. How do we know the right balance between enforcing rules for the benefit of everyone and being compassionate so that we recognise individual circumstances? How can we know when we need to stand firm and when we can flexible?

We don't always get this balance right of course and in human terms I would say that this is impossible. Many psychological tests include questions designed to test how tough or tender we are and we all tend towards one or other end of this spectrum. It is very difficult to be perfectly balanced.

And yet in Jesus our Good Shepherd we find toughness and tenderness perfectly combined within one and the same person. So in all the difficult decisions which we are facing we need to look to Jesus and to be guided by Holy Spirit to find this balance that we need to maintain.

*Tristram*

## **Points for Prayers**

- To follow Jesus the Good Shepherd and know the balance between toughness and tenderness
- 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 as they start their new term
- 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.

## **Hymn**

The Lord's my shepherd has been set to music in a number of different versions. A well known one is Crimond and there is also a modern version by Stuart Townend.

## **Kisumu Children Trust**

We held a Lent appeal to support the Kisumu Children Trust.

Our parishioners and Trustees Mike and Katherine Dare are thrilled to report from the Kisumu Children office that the Camelot Lent Appeal has to

date provided £860 to help orphans and vulnerable children in Kisumu. This amount will enable us to give a nourishing hot lunch to 100 needy children every day for a month - perhaps the only food they will receive in the day.

We know Covid-19 has challenged many in our local community too, and we are so encouraged and very grateful for this generous response and support for the Kisumu Children Trust. Thank you everyone!

### **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 this Sunday and next**

Services this Sunday and next are:-

Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> April	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> April	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	9.00 am Communion, Yarlinton
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury

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](http://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](mailto: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)