

# CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 110

## Pentecost Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021

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

### Welcome

Welcome to this edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

### Scripture Passages

*Acts 2: 1-21*

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

<sup>2</sup> And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup> Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs -- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." <sup>12</sup> All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

<sup>13</sup> But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

<sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup> Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup> And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup> Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

*John 15: 26-27, 16: 4b-15*

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.

<sup>27</sup> You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>5</sup> But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> about sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

<sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

## **Reflection**

In the Old Testament we learn of the Tower of Babel where people built a tower as a sign of their own pride and self-sufficiency. However, God scattered its builders and instead of one universal language there sprung up a multitude of different languages where people are unable to understand one another.

So often today it seems that we live in a world of Babel, a world of confusion and misunderstanding. This may not be just about not understanding the language which someone else speaks. It may be misunderstandings which arise because people have different temperaments and backgrounds.

And it has to be said that our own attempts to overcome such divides do not always work out as we intend. The story is told of a Bishop trying to put a class of primary school children at their ease by asking them ‘What is small, furry, bushy-tailed, found in your garden and collects nuts?’ The answer he received from one member of the class was probably not what he was expecting, ‘I know the answer is supposed to be Jesus but is it a squirrel?’

However at Pentecost, which we celebrate today, this legacy of Babel is put into reverse.

In Jerusalem a crowd has gathered which is universal in its nature, covering the whole of the known world at the time. For *‘there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.’*

And just as the crowd represents all the nations of the time so it contains those who speak any number of different languages, *'Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs'*

However, God gives to the disciples the supernatural ability to communicate in all these different languages with no need to go on difficult courses or to be a paying guest with a foreign family. This ability came as the Holy Spirit fills them. This spectacular gift also has a very practical purpose, the ability to speak to other people of God's goodness and power in words that they can understand. We are reminded that whatever our words and thoughts it is no use speaking them if we are using a language that is alien and remote from people's everyday experiences.

For the languages which the disciples speak are the native ones of each nation represented in the crowd. And the crowd is bewildered, amazed and astonished. They do not understand how this could this possibly be. Surely those who are speaking all come from Galilee? How can this be? At a natural level this is impossible.

Nevertheless, even though the languages which they use are wonderfully diverse, the basic truth which they communicate is the same, *'in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power'*.

The gift of tongues is both spectacular and very practical in its impact on the mission of the disciples. And yet before this gift could ever be given, something much more private and personal needed to be in place in each of their lives. A relationship of love with Jesus.

When Jesus speaks to His disciples in our passage from John's gospel which is set at the Last Supper it is evident that He loves them deeply. He is

preparing for a future in which He will no longer be physically present with them but where the disciples will enjoy the deeply personal presence of the Holy Spirit within them.

And He clearly cares about their wellbeing. Do they understand what is happening and where He is going? He feels with them their grief at their impending loss, the sorrow that has filled their hearts. He knows how bewildered they are, He is concerned that the disciples will not be able to bear the full weight of what He says. And so He gives them deep reassurance and comfort.

For He promises that He will send them the Holy Spirit (described in this passage as the Advocate). And the Spirit will form the same kind of deeply personal relationship with them as they have enjoyed up to this point with Jesus Himself. For it is the Spirit living in our hearts which is God's presence within us.

The spiritual journey of the disciples reminds us that the mission which we have been given to speak to others of the wonderful works of God is not possible unless we ourselves have first received God's love and the personal presence of Jesus given to us through the Holy Spirit. We cannot pass on to others what we have not first received for ourselves.

For the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of truth and His purpose is to bear witness to Jesus and the work of Jesus. The Holy Spirit in our lives gives us not simply a deeply personal knowledge of Jesus but also the ability to communicate that knowledge to other people in a way that makes sense to them.

The Spirit guides us personally into the fullness of the truth. The Spirit's work is not independent of Jesus but rather the Spirit communicates to us what belongs to and comes from Jesus and the Father.

So as we think of ourselves at the receiving end of the Spirit we place ourselves in the position of the Parthians, Medes, Elamites and those countless other peoples with their own languages who made up the crowd at Jerusalem. Just as God spoke to them in a language that they could understand so God will speak to us in a way that we can understand.

Pentecost is an opportunity for us to renew our faith and our prayer life or even to come to God in faith for the very first time.

Perhaps we could spend some time today and over the coming week reflecting on how we first heard and understood God's message to us of faith in Jesus Christ. We may find this a difficult question to answer. If we do then we can pray that God will show us what our native language for hearing God speak to us might be. As I reflect on this certainly the disciples' experience of fire as the Holy Spirit came upon them resonates with me but so also does the very different experience of the still, small voice in which God spoke in the Old Testament to the prophet Elijah.

And as we pray to hear and receive from God's Spirit so may we also ask that we be equipped just as the disciples on that very first Pentecost to pass on that message to others in a language that they will understand.

*Tristram*

### **Bishop Peter's Retirement**

Bishop Peter retired as our Diocesan Bishop yesterday on the eve of Pentecost after seven years in post.

His farewell service was at Wells Cathedral yesterday followed by a farewell tea. Downloads and videos are available on the Diocesan website.

We have sent Bishop Peter and his wife Jane a card of appreciation on behalf of all of us in the Camelot Parishes. During his time as Bishop he led

services both at North Cadbury and at Holton. The card includes a drawing of the Scissor Arch at Wells Cathedral made by Chris Akroyd, churchwarden at Blackford.

### **Points for Prayers**

- To know the love of Jesus for ourselves through the Holy Spirit and to be able to communicate God's message in a language that other people understand
- Continued thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes demonstrated throughout the course of this pandemic
- Wise decisions in relation to the final step in the easing of lockdown restrictions due to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> June
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds, those who have recently been bereaved and those suffering as a result of social isolation and in other ways
- India and other countries currently in crisis from coronavirus
- Bishop Peter's retirement (see notice above)
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and other local schools as they continue 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.

## **Hymn**

One well known hymn which we are singing at North Cadbury is 'Breathe on me, breath of God', a prayer which asks for the Holy Spirit to come upon us personally.

## **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.

## **Services during May**

The following services have been arranged in May. Please note that there is now an additional service including a baptism to be held on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May at St Michael's North Cadbury:-

Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> May	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00 am Morning Service with Baptism, North Cadbury
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> May	6.30 pm Evensong, Galhampton

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



## **Excalibur**

The May 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)