

# CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 118

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

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

## Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday's 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.

### *Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56*

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

<sup>32</sup> And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup> Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup> As he went ashore, he saw

a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

<sup>53</sup> When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. <sup>54</sup> When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, <sup>55</sup> and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup> And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

## Reflection

Pandemic or no pandemic, it is this time of year. I need to ask someone a question and the message comes back 'I am on leave at present. Please try someone else in my absence.' And we think to ourselves, yes, it's about time I planned a break.<sup>1</sup>

And I would suspect that most of us are **not** planning to go abroad. So we talk about staycations. But what do we mean by this? If we simply mean that instead of going abroad we are taking a holiday in this country strictly speaking I do not think that this is a staycation.

However, if we are indeed staying at home but taking a holiday from normal tasks this is indeed a staycation. It has its advantages. Think of the time and energy which you save through not having to pack everything up and then unpack it when you get back. But the disadvantage, of course, of a staycation is that your problems remain with you. If you are physically absent it is usually possible quietly to ignore them until you get back. But if you are not you may feel under pressure to give them your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> I am in fact planning a break from 9<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August. Whether or not it is a staycation I am not prepared to say!

In our gospel passage, Jesus and His disciples have come to the point of needing a break. But they find that even their short trip to get away from the crowds becomes more of a staycation and they cannot in fact get away from these demands and problems. I wonder how they coped?

The context of the gospel passage is that the apostles have just returned from their mission of healing and preaching the gospel in different towns and villages. They gather around Jesus to report back. No doubt they were excited by all that they had seen and done. But they must also have been tired, even exhausted.

*He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.*

And so the first thing that Jesus says to them is you need a break. When we have been involved in ministry or indeed in any intense activity we need to look after ourselves. If we keep going without a break our judgement and indeed our health can suffer.

So for Jesus and His disciples a staycation is not the answer. They need to get away and to change location. If they stay where they are they will be given no respite because people are coming and going around them and not even giving them time to eat.

And so they take the opportunity to go away to a deserted place in a boat. The plan is to take some much needed time and space for refreshment.

However, as happens with plans this one does not work out.

They had wanted to get away from the crowds but these crowds had a different idea. They spotted what Jesus and the disciples were doing. And so when they landed at what they thought would be a deserted place they found it instead full of people. These people had been too quick for them.

They had worked out what Jesus and His disciples were doing and had got ahead of them, hurrying along on foot and arriving ahead.

It is interesting how little these crowds were concerned with the needs of Jesus and the disciples as opposed to their own needs. They did not recognise that Jesus and the disciples needed a break and also some privacy. We may have been through times in our lives when we feel that our needs have not been recognised or valued and, if so, then we can identify with the position the disciples found themselves in.

The same pattern continues as we move on in our gospel passage. Our reading contains two separate extracts from the sixth chapter of Mark's gospel. Between these passages very significant ministry has occurred in the form of the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water. However, at the start of the second extract they come to a new place for ministry as they land at Gennesaret.

This may be a new place but nevertheless the pattern is the same. The crowds instantly recognise Jesus and once again there is no time for privacy or a break.

I wonder what our response would be if the holiday which we had planned and longed for was suddenly interrupted by a crowd of people who needed attention. If we were honest we might say that it would be one of irritation, even of anger. But confronted with this new crowd and with a new set of demands this is not how Jesus responds.

*As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.*

How can this be? One of the clues comes in the word used in the Greek to describe the compassion which Jesus feels for the crowds. The literal

meaning of this is a feeling that arises from the very innermost parts of the body. In other words, God's compassion is so deeply ingrained within Jesus that He sees not a crowd but people who are precious to God, sheep who are without a shepherd. And Jesus' response is to teach these people the ways of God. In these days when we hear so much about different statistics and the trends they reveal we must always remember that in God's sight all of us are people, precious to and dearly loved by Him. We are not just numbers on a statistical graph.

And so Jesus is able to continue ministering to these new crowds of people who bring the sick and needy to Him from the whole region. The sick are laid out in the marketplace so that even those who touch the fringe of his cloak are healed.

Sometimes we find ourselves in a position when we desperately need a break but have no realistic means of finding even a short and imperfect one. If we think of Jesus and His disciples the only time they were really able to get away was in their brief sea voyage. So, for us, life and its demands can just keep pressing in on us. Sometimes we have to accept the best that is offered to us in terms of a break rather than what we might ideally want. But in these times of pressure what do we do?

We can of course turn to God at any time, even with a short and rushed prayer, Help. If we have a bit more time we might try and commit as much as we can of Psalm 23 to memory. After the attacks on the World Trade Centre of 9/11 people were rushing down the escalator trying to get out. Some made it, some sadly did not. But a number of them were reciting Psalm 23 as they went.

Psalm 23 begins by reminding us that whatever our circumstances we can find complete fulfilment and satisfaction in God. The Lord is not simply a shepherd, He is **my** shepherd. I have a personal relationship with God.

True refreshment is given in God wherever we may be, however pressed we may be in human terms. This refreshment is expressed in the famous image of green pastures and still waters.

We also need to remember that God's protection is complete and reliable even in the darkest of circumstances. We need fear no evil when God's presence is with us, even the fear of death. Such enemies can indeed hurt us but they cannot destroy our relationship with God.

And God does not simply protect us in the presence of our enemies, He goes further and causes us to be well fed and satisfied, even honoured. Our head is anointed with oil like an honoured guest, a table is set before us and our cup overflows with joy.

The Psalm concludes on a triumphant and secure note. With God's protection, goodness and mercy will follow us the whole of our lives and we will live in God's house for ever.

I wonder what circumstances we are in at the moment? Perhaps we do feel that we are being invited to lie down in green pastures and beside still waters. If this is so, then we need to enjoy the refreshment that God is offering us. On the other hand, we may feel like Jesus and His disciples, pursued by one person or another and not given the chance for a proper break. However, whatever our circumstances our strength will come as we look to God for strength and keep His compassion, grace and mercy at the centre of our vision.

*Tristram*

### **Points for Prayers**

- To ask God for strength and to keep His compassion, grace and mercy at the centre of our vision whatever our circumstances may be

- For prayerful wisdom and appropriate action in response to the new church guidance relating to the lifting of legal restrictions as from Monday (see notice below)
- Continued thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes demonstrated throughout the course of this pandemic
- 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
- Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Diocesan staff as they take on additional responsibility following Bishop Peter's retirement and plan for the future
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and other local schools as they near the end of the school year and for the leavers' service at St Michael's North Cadbury on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July
- 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**

A hymn based around Psalm 23 is 'The Lord's my shepherd.'

## **Our daughter's christening**

We had been hoping to invite the whole of the benefice to share in the service of baptism for our daughter Tahlia. The date set was for this Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July.

When we received the news of the extension of the lockdown restrictions we decided to go ahead with this date rather than risk further uncertainty.

This means that the service will be capped at 30 and will also be carried out in accordance with current church and government guidelines. For this reason it will be a separate invitation only service. We hope later on to share with you some photographs of Tahlia's christening.

*Tristram*

### **New church and government guidance**

As anticipated further church guidance was published last Friday afternoon. If you would like to see details of this guidance please go to:-

**<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance>**  
and in particular look at the document entitled 'Opening and managing church buildings in step 4.'

The guidance is quite full and complex. It recognises the need to cater for a spectrum of views and circumstances in our congregations and community. I will be studying the guidance very carefully and will be communicating with churchwardens and others in the course of the next week or so. A range of activities are now legally possible within church. These include congregational singing, the sharing of the Common Cup at Communion and the fact that face masks and social distancing are no longer legally necessary.

However, in the general context of rising infections, we need to remember that there is a difference between what is legally permissible and what is wise, responsible and appropriate. Considerable scope is given within the guidance for individual and local decision making.

I would suggest that rather than making hasty decisions on these points we need to give ourselves the time that is necessary for prayer, thought and as much consultation as possible with PCCs and individual members of congregations. This will, hopefully, give us the wisdom that we need in



order to make right choices among the different options that are now open to us.

*Tristram*

### **Congregational Singing**

As from Monday it will now be legally possible to sing in church. But please see the note above on the process of decision making on this point. As has previously been the case congregational singing is permitted for those services which are taking place outdoors in the churchyard.

### **Services for July**

Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> July	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton

### **Excalibur**

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church

in the Camelot Parishes. The July edition of Excalibur has also been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://camelotparishes.co.uk)

### **The Parish Office**

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him 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)