

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 134

Sunday 21st November 2021

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

Welcome

Welcome to this edition of Cutting Edge Camelot on the Sunday commemorating Christ the King. Ron reflects below on what this means.

Scripture Passages

Revelation 1: 4-8

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds;

every eye will see him,

even those who pierced him;

and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

John 18: 33-38

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?”

³⁵ Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?”

³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”

³⁷ Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?”

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

³⁸ Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”

Reflection

Portishead, just west of Bristol, is advertising in Church Times for a new Rector. They want *an inspiring, prayerful, courageous and collaborative Team Rector. An enabling and inspiring leader, able to operate at a strategic level to discern a vision and to lead forward both staff and congregation.* I hope they find one. The reading about Jesus and Pontius Pilate today is because this is the feast of Christ the King, and so it’s all about leadership. Pilate had heard that Jesus was being referred to as King of the Jews. *Are you a king?* he asked.

You’ve surely all seen the Cerne Abbas Giant, carved in the chalk of a Dorset hillside, waving a huge weapon in the air and carrying a club. He’s not as old as people thought. He’s seventeenth century, and he’s a sort of political cartoon of Oliver Cromwell. His club shows he has power, but he’s naked, which means, from the point of view of the people who made him, he has no authority. Power without authority is what we see in the world today where elections have been rigged, or dictators have simply taken over. People

aren't content with old patterns of leadership anymore. Someone who claims to lead just because they have strength of arms doesn't go down well with us. We're used to democracy. Our leaders are our leaders because we've chosen them. Even our Queen only reigns because we allow it. That at least is what came out of the Civil War and the Commonwealth. A true leader must have his people behind him. If he doesn't, he's not leading, he's just going for a walk. Jesus is only our King, our leader, if we choose to follow him.

In the film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, two women decide to do what father has forbidden. *That's all right*, says one of them, *we can persuade him that what he really told us to do was what we intended to do anyway. Is that so?* The other one asks. *I thought in Greek families the Father was the head. Oh, he is*, says the first one, *but the woman is the neck, and she can turn the head any way she wants.*

That says a lot about headship and leadership. You can't be the head of the family by laying down laws and expecting everyone to jump to it; it doesn't work. I used to go out with a girl whose father was a real tyrant - he laid down when his children could go out, and what time they had to be back, right up to when they married and left home. They all left home as soon as they could. They loved their father, despite how hard he made himself to love. You have to listen to the other family members, then persuade them to agree with you, and then you can work together. Important decisions are always made together, by mutual agreement. Pam and I share the decision making. She makes all the little decisions, like whether we buy a new car, or where we go on holiday, and I make the big decisions like whether we support American foreign policy in the Middle East. But you really do have to consult, and discuss, and come to decisions. If that's true for a family, it's also true for a team, a business, a church, or a nation. A good leader has to listen, discuss and try to persuade, then the others will follow the leader, even if they don't entirely agree. The saddest thing about Syria is that the people didn't want President Assad to go. They asked for some

fairly modest changes, some freedoms, and he didn't listen. And now he's president of a country reduced to rubble, a population getting out as fast as it can. That's not leadership. He's shown he doesn't love his people, or his country.

So on the Sunday of Christ the King, we look at Jesus' style of leadership.

Maybe it's a pattern for us to copy, or to look for in our own leaders.

National leaders, or church leaders. There were times, that Pilate had obviously heard about, when people tried to make Jesus a king, and he was horrified at the prospect. In three of the gospels, if anyone uses the m-word – *Messiah* - he gives them a firm shushing. And in today's reading from John, Pilate asked Jesus whether he was a king. Jesus went all sorts of ways to explain that when Pilate used the word, and Jesus used the word, they meant different things. He knew that earthly rulers could be tyrants. He'd said to his followers:

It will not be so among you. But whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

This means there must be no limit to the sacrifices you're willing to make for the sake of those you're privileged to lead.

We all have some position of leadership, whether it's over a class of pupils, a team at work, a choir, your family, some club or committee. Does your leadership follow Jesus' example? Is there more you could do to sacrifice yourself for the rest? Because without sacrifice, there can be no true leadership. Respect only comes when you win it by your service. People don't respect you if you stand on your dignity. And as I took the pattern of leadership up from the family, so we can bring the illustration back down again to the family.

St Paul discusses Christian marriage in his letters. In his day, everybody believed that children should obey their parents, wives should obey their husbands, and slaves their masters. Paul reminded them that obedience isn't automatic; you have to deserve it. The love in a human family is like the love between Jesus and his bride, the Church. The Church must obey Jesus, because Jesus sacrificed himself for it. That's what power with authority means. So if you believe a wife must obey her husband, it follows that every husband must sacrifice himself for his wife. Sacrifice himself completely, every moment of every day, not insisting on having his own way, but looking for new ways he can serve the woman he loves. Marriage, in the Bible, is a partnership of equals, based on mutual self-sacrifice.

In the same way, if you believe children should obey their parents, then parents must sacrifice themselves for their children. Parenthood is self-sacrifice. Once you have children, you don't get a lot of time to yourselves; you can't expect to do what you want to, and you can't have your own way. It's hard work being a parent, but it's worth it, because the way of self-sacrifice is the only way to get respect. The reward is when your children follow your example, not because you tell them to, but because they've learned to admire your love for them.

Christ the King is an unexpected model for leadership, whether it's leadership at work, or headship of a family, or a church. Jesus was a king who didn't ride a chariot, but a donkey. His throne is a cross, and his crown is thorns. But his example of sacrificial leadership is the one we have to follow. A life of love and mutual self-sacrifice is the only way that works, the only way we can find real happiness.

Ron

Points for Prayers

- COVID plans for winter and our own planning for the Christmas period
- Continued thanksgiving for the care, skill and courage of NHS workers and that they will not be overwhelmed by the demands on them in the winter period
- Actions to be taken following climate change summit in Glasgow
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Diocesan staff as they take on additional responsibility in this vacancy in See
- For the choice of a new Bishop, someone who shares God's heart for this Diocese
- North Cadbury Church School and other local schools
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Hymn

A hymn which celebrates Christ's kingship is 'Crown him with many crowns'.

Services in November

Sunday 21 st November	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 21 st November	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 21 st November	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury

Sunday 21 st November	4.00 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 28 th November	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 28 th November	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 28 th November	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 28 th November	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 28 th November	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 28 th November	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 28 th November	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 28 th November	4.00 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 November edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk and on each parish's A Church Near You webpage.

The Parish Office

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