

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 143**

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022**

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

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

## **Scripture Passage**

*1 Corinthians 12: 12-31*

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many members, yet one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; <sup>24</sup> whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body,

giving the greater honour to the inferior member, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

## Reflection

I hope you won't think me very irreverent, but despite having read 1 Corinthians 12 many times before, as I sat down to read it to prepare for this talk, I was reminded of Mr Potato Head. Now, Mr Potato Head may have shot to fame as a result of Toy Story, but I imagine that those who designed him hoped that, as well as encouraging some fun and creativity, Mr Potato Head would teach young children about the different parts of the body and their importance. As I read Paul's words about the various parts of the body, either claiming not to belong to the body, or of not needing other parts of the body, I couldn't help but think of Mr Potato Head, and what a sorry state he would be in if all his body parts refused to come together. If his feet decided that because they weren't hands they didn't belong to his body, or if his ears decided because they weren't eyes they didn't belong to the body. Or if his eyes decided they didn't need his hands, and so on. Pretty soon he would stop being Mr Potato Head, and just be a plain old potato.



And while it might seem a bit ridiculous to apply Paul's teaching to Mr Potato Head, maybe it shows us exactly the point Paul was making: if all the members of Christ's body – the Church – refuse to fulfil their role within the community, then pretty soon, the Church would no longer function healthily.

I wonder if you've ever attended a church and felt that you didn't belong? Maybe you thought, "I don't know the words to this song" or "I've still got doubts about this". Or you found yourself thinking, "Because I am not like so-and-so, I do not belong to the church".

Or perhaps you've found yourself thinking that maybe the church would be better off without a certain person or group of people. Did they ask awkward questions? Or have different ideas about what the church should be like? Or did you just find them annoying? Did you find yourself thinking, 'The church has no need of you'?

Paul is very clear. Every person is not just welcome, but *needed*. Just as it sounds ridiculous for a foot to say that it doesn't belong to the body because it is not a hand, or for an eye to say to a hand that it is unnecessary, so it *should* sound ridiculous to us, if we ever find ourselves saying, 'I do not belong' or 'We have no need of you'. Every single person is needed in the Body of Christ in order for it to truly be the Body of Christ. As Paul says, 'Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it'.

And what about those 'weaker', 'less respectable', 'less honourable', 'inferior' members? Who are they? Probably whoever society says they are. But as we know from Jesus' teachings, those who society least values are still of infinite value to God. The Beatitudes are a whole list of blessings upon those who society might define as weak or inferior: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted. Those who society labels as weak become indispensable in the Body of Christ. Those who society labels as less honourable or less

respectable, are treated with the most honour and respect in the Body of Christ. And those who are labelled as inferior, are given the greatest honour in the Body of Christ. I don't believe that there is a single person who Jesus looks at and thinks, "You're weak; you're less respectable; you're less honourable; you're inferior".

Maybe it's helpful to think of the church as being like a puzzle. Each piece is necessary and important for making the puzzle complete. We might be tempted to say the corner pieces, or edge pieces, or the pieces right in the middle are the most important, but ultimately, if you're missing just one piece for anywhere in the puzzle, you have an incomplete puzzle. In the same way, until every person is part of the Body of Christ – the Church – then it remains incomplete.

Right at the end of our passage, Paul, having spent a great deal of time asserting that no one person or one gift is any greater than any other, then seems to undermine himself. In verse 31 he says, 'But strive for the *greater gifts*. And I will show you a still more excellent way'. But what are the greater gifts and the more excellent way? Well, the very next section of his letter tells us: **love**. In 1 Corinthians 13 we find Paul's teaching on love. So, what are the 'greater gifts'? The gifts that we find if we follow the most excellent way of love:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (v.4-7)

The Body of Christ, following the example of Jesus' sacrificial love, should be defined by these characteristics. That is what we aspire to. Of course, we aren't there yet and we mess up – just like the body which has a headache or sprained ankle – but we keep going. Striving to become the kind of community Jesus calls us to be. So, if you ever find yourself thinking that

you aren't important or you don't matter, or find yourself thinking that about someone else. Then think again! We are all important, we are all needed, because without every single one of us, and the unique gifts we bring, then the Body of Christ remains incomplete.

'Now **you** are the body of Christ and individually members of it'.

*Anna.*

## **Masks are back for the moment**

Just a reminder to everyone that at the moment. However, many of the government's Plan B covid restrictions will be lifted as from next Thursday. We anticipate that this will mean that masks will no longer be mandatory in churches but are awaiting detailed guidance on this subject from the Church of England.

## **Points for Prayers**

- Remembering that all of us (ourselves included) are important in enabling the church, the body of Christ, to function as it should do
- The transitions which will take place as Plan B Covid restrictions are lifted
- 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
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- Our curate Anna and her family as they prepare for their move to Cornwall
- 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
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- For North Cadbury Church School and other local schools as their new term proceeds
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

## Hymn

One of the hymns set for this Sunday is 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun.'

## Services for the rest of January

Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	4.00 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	9.30 am Family Service, North Cheriton
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	11.00 am Matins, Maperton
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	4.00 pm Evensong, 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 December and January editions of Excalibur have now been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://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](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)