

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 148

Sunday 27th February 2022

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

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. The news this week has been dominated by the terrible attack by Russia upon the Ukraine and this is at the forefront of all our prayers.

Meanwhile at the local level this Sunday is the last one on which our curate Anna will be officiating. She and her family will be moving to Cornwall. Below you will find a message from Anna to all of us followed by a reflection by her on this week’s scripture passages.

We will be making a presentation to Anna at the end of this Sunday’s service at North Cadbury. In next week’s Cutting Edge Camelot we hope to share some photographs of this presentation.

Message from Anna

I wanted to take this opportunity to say how much Tim, Daniel and I have enjoyed getting to know you all. It has been a joy and a privilege to serve my curacy in the Camelot Parishes; I will take with me so many happy memories, as well as lots of useful experience and learning. Thank you all for making us feel so welcome and at home here.

I’d like to say a very special thank you to all the churchwardens, not only for all you do for the churches and communities of the Camelot Parishes, but also for the ways you have supported and encouraged me personally.

My thanks also go to Ron and Alison, and while COVID has meant that I haven't seen so much of you in recent times, you have both kindly taught me lots, not only in the advice you have shared, but also by simply exercising your ministries as I've watched.

Finally, and most importantly, my thanks go to Tristram. Being a Training Incumbent (i.e. someone who is responsible for training a curate like me) involves a huge amount of time and work 'behind the scenes': making time to explain how things are done – especially in the early days; creating space for reflecting and learning from experience; and offering guidance and feedback, as well as the inevitable paperwork. I am so grateful to you for all the time you have given to me, the wisdom you have shared with me, and the kindness you have shown to me.

I am very thankful to God that I got to be curate in the Camelot Parishes – you have all been a huge blessing to me.

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.

With love from,
Anna

(If you'd like to stay in touch once we've moved, my email address is annaclarecreedon@gmail.com)

Scripture Passages

Luke 9: 28-36

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³ not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. ¹⁵ Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶ but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

4 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

Reflection

I wonder if you can think of a time when you have been absolutely exhausted? Maybe it felt like a real struggle to keep your eyes open? Or you even had that horrible feeling when you actually started to drop off, but then suddenly jolted awake again? I wonder if that's a little bit like how Peter, James and John were feeling?

Of course, there are different kinds of tiredness. In our reading, Peter, James and John were clearly feeling physically exhausted. But at times, we all experience emotional and even spiritual exhaustion too.

I read a blog at the end of 2021 that identified 'tired' as the word that epitomised the year for the author and for many others that they had spoken to. After all that we have been through over the last two years, many people are emotionally exhausted. Exhausted from the pain of being separated from loved ones. From the grief of losing loved ones. From the anxiety about jobs and incomes. From the uncertainty of an ever-changing situation... And after the events of the last few days, we may also be feeling fearful, upset and angry on behalf of the people of Ukraine. So emotionally exhausted is probably a very apt way to describe how many people are feeling at the moment.

And I wonder if some of us might also be feeling spiritually exhausted? Perhaps having struggled with the fact that church and worship as we had always known them had to be radically altered. Maybe struggling with not feeling spiritually nourished.

Perhaps you can relate to some or all of these forms of tiredness – physical, emotional or spiritual.

In Luke chapter nine, verse 32, we read, ‘Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep, but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him’. Peter, John and James were feeling exhausted, and yet, here they were, sat on a mountain, trying to stay awake as Jesus prayed. And then something extraordinary happened! Imagine suddenly being jolted awake to the sight of Jesus, radiant, as his face and clothes became dazzling, with Moses and Elijah standing beside him.

So what do we learn from Peter, James and John as they witness the transfiguration?

First, they were faithful. They followed Jesus up the mountain, even though they were clearly exhausted. Being faithful literally means being steadfast – which makes me think of a tree rooted to the spot. Perhaps like the image of the tree in Psalm 1, whose roots are planted to streams of water; bringing the nourishment that it needs. What does being faithful look like in practice? Living a life centred on God, where we seek to live in accordance with his will. And to know God’s will, we have to spend time with God – in prayer, in worship, in reading the Bible, in spending time with other Christians. Sometimes, all we might be able to manage is to turn up at church and be physically present. And who knows, that might have been exactly how Peter, James or John were feeling as they followed Jesus up the mountain?

What else do we learn from the disciples? They were awake! Now, I don’t just mean that they were physically awake, but they were *spiritually* awake. Because of their faithfulness, they recognised what was happening. They recognised Moses and Elijah. They recognised the voice of God. We hear in

verse 36 that Peter, James and John don't immediately tell anyone what they have experienced; they stay silent. I wonder if like Mary, who dwelt on all the things the shepherds said to her, they continued to dwell on the significance of what they had witnessed. Do **we** take the chance to stop and ask ourselves where we see God at work in our lives? I'm not suggesting that we're going to witness something as extraordinary as the transfiguration on a daily basis! But do we have our eyes, ears and hearts open to how God might be at work in our lives and the lives of those around us? And are we ready to respond?

And that's the final thing we learn from the disciples: that it's OK to get it wrong. Sometimes, when we seek to respond to what God is doing, we might go about it in the wrong way. Peter, probably feeling completely awestruck and bewildered by what he is witnessing, blurts out, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah". Luke's Gospel makes clear this wasn't the right thing to say as Peter's words are followed by the comment 'not knowing what he said'. Peter, in suggesting that they create three dwellings, or tents, for Jesus, Moses and Elijah is basically suggesting that the three of them remain on the mountain permanently. Peter has had this awesome experience and doesn't want to let it go. I imagine we can all relate to the feeling of wanting to hold onto so-called mountain-top experiences. And I'm sure we can also all relate to saying or doing the wrong thing! Peter gets it wrong on other occasions too, but you know what, Jesus still loves him, still chooses him as a disciple, and still uses him to grow his church. God doesn't expect us to be perfect, as Paul heard Jesus say to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12.9).

And this sentiment is echoed in our reading from 2 Corinthians. We read in Chapter 4, verse 2: 'Therefore, since it is by God's mercy we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart'. Paul is talking about how we are slowly being transformed to be more like Jesus; 'from one degree of glory to

another'. And sometimes, it probably does feel like it's a very slow process, but that's OK. God's mercy is new every day (Lamentations 3.23). We are called to seek to do God's will in the places that we find ourselves – that is our ministry – but he doesn't expect us to be perfect finished articles who get it right all the time. And he doesn't expect us to do it in our own strength alone. So, if you – like the disciples – are feeling pretty exhausted right now, know that God is with you and that his mercy is new every day.

I was recently reminded of a prayer written by Thomas Merton, which you may have come across before, and I think it expresses much of what I have been saying in the form of a prayer, so I'd like to end with it:

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore, will I trust you always,
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.
Amen.

(by Thomas Merton in *'Thoughts in Solitude'*)

Anna.

Points for Prayers

- To be faithful and to be spiritually refreshed by God
- The conflict between Russia and the Ukraine
- Caring for those who are especially vulnerable following the raising of coronavirus restrictions and continued thanksgiving for the care, skill and courage of all healthcare workers
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- Thanksgiving for our curate Anna's ministry among us and prayers for her and her family in their forthcoming 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 about to continue their terms
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Hymn

One of the hymns which we are singing at North Cadbury is 'Praise my soul the king of heaven.'

Services for this Sunday and next

Sunday 27 th February	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 27 th February	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 27 th February	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 27 th February	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 27 th February	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 27 th February	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 27 th February	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 27 th February	4.00 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 6 th March	9.00 am Communion, Yarlinton
Sunday 6 th March	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 6 th March	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury

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 February edition of Excalibur has now been published online at 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) 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)