

# CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 167

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

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

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this Sunday’s edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

## **Scripture Passages**

*Psalms 46*

God is our refuge and strength,

a very present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,

though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam,

though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*

<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,

the holy habitation of the Most High.

<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;

God will help it when the morning dawns.

<sup>6</sup> The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;

he utters his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;

the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

<sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works of the LORD;

see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;

he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;

he burns the shields with fire.

<sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that I am God!

I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth.”

<sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;

the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

### *Luke 10: 38-42*

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.”

<sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup> there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

## **Reflection**

How do you visualise Martha’s kitchen? In my imagination, I see pots and plates scattered everywhere and constantly being moved from one place to another. And people also on the go all the time, scurrying across the room to get this dish in order and then that one, all acting against a very tight timetable and with no time to take even a very short break.

And then where are Jesus and Mary? Given the living conditions of the day and the fact that Martha and her family were not grand people I imagine them not as being in an entirely different room but maybe in a separate area of the same room. In other words they are apart from the others but there is no firm or fixed barrier to protect them from the noise and chaos of the ceaseless activity around them.

And if this scene was to be depicted in a painting perhaps Jesus and Mary would be shown lit up with a little glowing circle of light just to emphasise how different they are in spiritual terms.

With all of this it is perhaps no surprise that Martha finds herself exasperated to find that there are two people who seem to be doing absolutely nothing to help with all the mountains of preparations that still need to be made.

Jesus himself, of course, she cannot criticise directly. Jesus is their honoured guest, their Master and their Teacher. It is, after all, in honour of Jesus that all these preparations are being made in the first place.

And yet even so Jesus is preventing her sister Mary from offering her any help at this crucial point in the life of this household. Somehow Mary must be prised away from Jesus. No doubt all this listening and studious quiet is all very well in its way and has its place but that place is surely not now. And so I think we can rightly hear a note of reproach in Martha's voice as she says to Jesus "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me."

And though we hope that Martha, as an obedient disciple, was willing to accept Jesus' verdict that, in contrast to Martha's own worry and distraction over many things 'Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her' equally these cannot have been easy words for her to hear.

And when we visualise the setting of Psalm 46 maybe our picture is a rather similar one.

It is a time of undoubted danger and peril. The earth itself seems to be about to change, the mountains are shaking and trembling and seem to be transplanted into the middle of the sea where the waters are roaring and foaming.

It is a scene of war and national upheaval. The future of kingdoms is uncertain in this time of uproar.

And when we turn to the work of God there is nothing calm or quiet about it. Yes, God does bring about the end of wars and yet this is accompanied by desolation. Strong, even violent actions are necessary in order to end violence. The bow is broken, the spear is shattered and shields are burnt with fire.

And then into all this devastation and chaos God speaks. What a contrast this is! God's voice is one which commands peace and stillness, which assures us of God's presence and gives us a promise of God's complete protection and security.

Once again, as with the contrast between Martha and Mary, we might visualise a little pool of calm and light within a restless and raging ocean.

So what the story of Mary and Martha and Psalm 46 have in common is that their undoubtedly powerful portrayal of God's rest and peace is framed by a scene of restless activity, even turmoil. As the conclusion to Psalm 46 puts it, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' So this does not offer us an escape from trouble. Rather the promise is that it is right in the middle of our troubles that we can find God's help and strength.

This may be a rather different picture from the one which naturally occurs to us when we think of seeking God's peace. Perhaps we imagine an idyllic retreat centre set among beautiful gardens and meadows with a river running softly beside it. That is after all the image given to us in Psalm 23 where God makes the Psalmist lie down in green pastures and to be led by still waters. And perhaps we also imagine music quietly playing in the background. It all adds up to a good opportunity for rest and spiritual refreshment accompanied hopefully by good food, a quiet library and ample

space to reflect safely insulated for the time being from all the cares and troubles of life.

Or if we wanted a less overtly spiritual picture of what it means to get a break from all our pressures and to find God's peace we might simply imagine what a really good holiday might be like.

However, without disputing that both these alternatives offer us an undoubted value and refreshment, their dynamic is a still very different to the one which emerges when we seek to visualise the setting of Jesus' encounter with Mary and Martha or of Psalm 46. And the difference is that in both these cases there is no escape route offered from the turmoil of life. Rather God's gift of stillness and peace is to be found right in the centre of such trouble and activity.

And if we think about it the response of taking a retreat or a holiday to build ourselves up against the wearing effects of the pressures of life is no doubt a good one but it can never be a complete answer. For one thing most of us do not have the means to afford continual holidays and retreats. And even if we did the pressures of life would still not go away.

And so the challenge for us is to find God's peace and stillness not outside but within the normal course of life. This can on occasions be a setting of chaos and turmoil.

For many people the way they do this is to have a 'quiet time' where they pray and read the Bible. This can happen at any time but it can be especially helpful to do this at the beginning of the day. For as you then go out to face whatever challenges the day brings, maybe some important meeting, you find that it makes an enormous difference to how the day goes and that you can experience God's peace even when you are placed in very difficult circumstances.

But sometimes our days can be too pressurised even to allow this to happen. Even so, we can maybe find a way of remembering God even when we have to keep going at our frantic activities. Brother Lawrence, for instance, who was a cook in a monastery in the seventeenth century found that he was able to practise the presence of God even when he was occupied with the chores of the kitchen.

‘Be still and know that I am God.’ How can each of us respond to this command in the challenges that we face in our everyday lives?

*Tristram*

## **Points for Prayers**

- Finding God’s stillness and peace within the stresses of everyday life
- Heatwave and health warnings
- Need to choose new Prime Minister
- Rising number of new covid cases
- Peace and justice to prevail in the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine and for humanitarian efforts to help all those harmed by the conflict
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For the Deanery in considering Pastoral Reorganisation
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- For North Cadbury church school and our other local schools as they continue their school terms

- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

## Hymn

One hymn set for this morning is 'Immortal, invisible.'

## Services for this week and next

Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Communion. Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlington
Sunday 24 <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 now 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)