

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 210

Trinity Sunday 4th June 2023

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

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot this Sunday.

Scripture Passages

Psalm 8

O LORD, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;

⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.

⁶ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,

⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,

⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

⁹ O LORD, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Matthew 28: 16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Reflection

On Trinity Sunday, we sometimes wonder why such a complicated formula is needed in order to explain the Christian faith. Three in One and One in Three with all kinds of possibilities to get this relationship wrong and to be accused of heresy.

Some have even raised the question of whether the Trinity is a later addition to our understanding which obscures the simplicity of the faith of the early church.

And yet, passages such as this morning's gospel which is Jesus' great commission to go and make disciples from every nation, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit show us that the concept of the Trinity has been around from the very earliest days of the church

We might have chosen an alternative passage for today which makes the same point. This comes from the second letter to the Corinthians by the apostle Paul. This was written within a generation of Christ's death and contains the prayer that we know as the grace. This well-known prayer again distinguishes between the three different Persons of the Trinity - the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

So, as Christians our understanding of God as Trinity has been with us from the beginning. And this understanding has, in practical terms, been of great importance to help us know how to respond and relate to God. For how close could we get to God if all we knew about God was that He created both ourselves and the whole universe?

Many who would like a simpler version of faith might take this as their starting point. They might say, yes, of course I believe in God. Just look at the beauties of Creation, there must be a God behind it all.

Acknowledging God in this way is indeed a good start on the road to faith. Such acknowledgement can even lead to praise.

This is, for instance the way in which our first reading this morning, Psalm 8, begins and ends.

Psalm 8 is a hymn of praise for the overwhelming majesty of God. It declares this majesty and how God's glory exceeds the whole of the created order, the heavens. For the heavens, the moon and the stars, vast and awesome as they are pale into insignificance when compared to God. They are simply the work of God's fingers.

And after looking at the role of humanity, the Psalm ends on the same note on which it has begun, one of praise for the sheer majesty and splendour of God.

This is undoubtedly awe inspiring. But, if our understanding of God ended at this point, would this answer the deepest questions of our lives and our need for personal meaning and significance?

For we can indeed find God 'out there' above and beyond the unimaginable vastness of the universe. But can God also be found, 'in here', in the warmth, comfort and community of the ordinary human heart?

Or to put it another way and using the words of Einstein's question 'Is the universe a friendly place?'

For if the universe is to be a friendly place for us, we as human beings need to have a meaningful role and purpose to fulfil within it.

Here again Psalm 8 helps us. Despite all the majestic vastness of the universe, nevertheless even the tiniest detail matters.

Human beings may seem very small and insignificant as a part of God's whole creation. In this light, the Psalmist's question, 'what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?' is a very relevant one.

But this plaintive question does receive a positive answer. There is indeed an important part for people to play in God's plan. God is mindful of them and has given them an intrinsic dignity and worth, 'Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.'

And not simply are human beings significant for who they are in themselves, they also have a pivotal role to play in relation to the rest of God's Creation. For they are called to rule over God's Creation, 'You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet'.

The comprehensive nature of the rule to which human beings are called is emphasised by the catalogue of animals, birds which the Psalm then proceeds to list.

However, we must realise that this rule should not be exercised in any arbitrary or tyrannical way. Rather it is a rule which is to be compassionate and wise and to respect and protect the very frailest and smallest of our

fellow beings. It is the type of rule which could be expressed in the word 'Stewardship'.

This emphasis on caring for those who may otherwise seem insignificant comes out in the Psalm's affirmation of the importance of the praise of children and even babies, 'Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.'

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In His ministry, Jesus too stresses the importance of children. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus recalls these words from Psalm 8 when confronting the anger of His opponents as they take offence at the children crying out in the temple 'Hosanna to the Son of David'. And we also remember His well known words about the need to enter the kingdom of heaven as a little child.

So, yes, God is not simply the awe inspiring Creator of the universe but also One who like a Father cares deeply about all its life and in particular human beings and their most vulnerable representatives. But where does Jesus' ministry and the gift of the Holy Spirit fit into all of us?

As a starting point, we might ask whether any of us, as human beings, have fulfilled the nobility of God's call on our lives. Have we been wise in our stewardship of Creation? Has the rule which we have exercised been one of wisdom and compassion in which the weakest and most vulnerable of our fellow human beings can find protection and security?

Surely, we only need to look around us at a world of war and injustices of all forms and the environmental crisis that we are in to return the answer 'No' to this question.

In different ways, we have all failed to fulfil God's call and purpose for us. In Paul's words, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23).

Nevertheless, all is not lost. For the gospel assures us that there is one human being who has fulfilled this call on behalf of all of us.

The book of Hebrews contains a detailed commentary on Psalm 8. It begins by quoting its words about the intrinsic dignity of human beings and their call to rule over Creation,

‘But someone has testified somewhere,

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?

You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned them with glory and honour,
subjecting all things under their feet.” (Hebrews 2: 6-8)’

At the same time, however, the book of Hebrews is frankly realistic when it looks at whether or not this call has been fulfilled. Hebrews 2:8 reminds us that as it is, we do not yet see everything placed under our feet.

But we need not despair if we trust in Christ. For Hebrews goes on to assure us that we can see this great human destiny and calling fulfilled in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus,

‘but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death.’
(Hebrews 2:9)

Jesus Christ, then, is the One who enables us as human beings to fulfil our true destiny. And, in this, He acts as our go between and representative with God. He can do this because He is not simply a human being but also part of the divine Trinity.

Christ is our link with God and this link is made real and alive in our hearts through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which we recalled last week at Pentecost.

So, God is not simply 'out there' to be found in the awesome splendour and wonder of Creation but also 'in here', capable of living within us as we welcome Christ and the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

Of course, it is understandable to question whether the Trinity truly matters. Some of the arguments about the Trinity which have taken place down the ages are indeed very technical and complex.

But one way of answering this question is to ask ourselves how satisfied we would be if all we knew about God was that God was 'out there' as the infinitely great Creator of a vast universe.

Such a faith might well inspire awe and even praise. But surely in Christ and in the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are offered so much more. For our worship is of a God whom we can know personally and who can also be found 'in here', to be found in a closeness and warmth of heart which becomes real to us as we open our lives to the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is rather like the difference between going out on a clear night to watch the stars and being struck by God's grandeur or having God right beside us to talk to at the end of a busy and challenging day. Surely that warmth and intimacy is what we crave and it is this relationship into which the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit invites us to enter.

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- Responding to the invitation to enter into the warmth and intimacy of the life of the Trinity
- Victims of the Indian train crash
- Resolution to industrial disputes especially in the healthcare sector

- Conflict between Russia and the Ukraine and those who are refugees from this conflict
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton and its residents
- For teachers, children and parents of North Cadbury church school

Hymn

One well known hymn for Trinity Sunday is ‘ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.’

Services for this week and next

Sunday 4 th June	9.00 am Communion, Yarlington
Sunday 4 th June	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 4 th June	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 11 th June	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton
Sunday 11 th June	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 11 th June	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 11 th June	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton

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 June 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)