

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 246

Mothering Sunday 10th March 2024

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

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot on this Mothering Sunday.

Scripture Passages

Colossians 3: 12-17

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Luke 2: 28-35

Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

Reflection

It is a natural human instinct for a parent to have great expectations and wishes for their child. I suspect that Mary and Joseph, the human parents of Jesus might have shared this instinct.

Although her own status was very humble, Mary had been told by the angel Gabriel before Jesus was born that she was to be the mother of the Son of God whose kingdom would last for ever.

Our gospel passage this morning comes from later on in the narratives of Jesus’ birth. By this time, Jesus is a babe in arms being presented according to the custom of the time in the Temple at Jerusalem.

There Mary, Joseph and Jesus meet a devout man called Simeon who has a God given insight into who this baby is to become. I have expanded the very short ‘official’ text for Mothering Sunday to include a few additional and preliminary verses. These make it easier to understand the context of Simeon’s words about Jesus.

Simeon praises God for Jesus. Now that he has seen Jesus, Simeon feels that his life’s purpose has been fulfilled. So, his prayer is for the Lord to let his servant depart in peace.

And after that Simeon speaks of Jesus' extraordinary destiny. Jesus, who is the light of the world will show God's character both to His own people, He is the glory of His people Israel, but also more widely to all peoples wherever they may be, He is 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles.'

Is it any surprise that Joseph and Mary responded to what Simeon had to say with amazement? And also, we might suppose with pride and excitement. What a privilege and wonder it was for them to be the parents of Jesus, the Saviour of the World.

Mary and Joseph were, of course, in a unique position. And yet something of their emotions might be shared and echoed by parents all around the world and through the ages when they are told that their child has an extraordinary character or gifts or has been chosen to fulfil an extraordinary purpose in life.

And yet...that is not all that Simeon has to say. He goes on to bless the family and to tell Mary that 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

These words cannot have been nearly so easy to receive. Through these words we learn something of the pain and sacrifice that lies in wait for Mary in her role as a mother. When our child is unpopular, we too share something of that pain on his or her behalf. But Jesus will not simply be unpopular and opposed. Mary's suffering goes deeper than that.

A sword will pierce her soul. Mary will receive a sharp, agonising and indelible mark that goes to the very core of her being. As we continue during Lent to ponder what Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross means for each and every one of us, so we also think of the agony that Mary herself would have gone through in this process. An agony which culminates in her

standing by the foot of the Cross watching her son Jesus, whose birth had been such an occasion for rejoicing, now dying the most humiliating, painful and shameful death that could be imagined.

Again, Mary is unique. However, at the same the pain and sacrifice of parenthood that she experienced will be echoed to a greater or lesser extent in the lives of countless other parents.

So far, we have looked at the intensity and extremes of the experiences of motherhood and parenthood. And yet as we know life is not like that all the time. And indeed, it is not possible to live for long at the intensity of either extreme joy or extreme sorrow.

Rather, a great deal of life and of parenthood is simply about keeping going and navigating the rather more mundane ups and downs that we will all inevitably encounter. For this we need to find a balance and an underlying pattern and routine which will help to sustain us through both excitement and challenge.

It is this pattern which is set out for us in our reading from the book of Colossians. This speaks in a metaphorical way of the daily clothes that we put on. In a spiritual sense such clothes can represent those healthy and life giving personal habits which become so much a part of our everyday life that they become our instinctive responses to any new or unknown challenge that comes our way. They are indeed more than just healthy personal habits; for the qualities that are listed in this passage are those that belong to Christ Himself. We are called to clothe ourselves with the clothes of Christ.

These qualities are those of 'compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience' and above all, 'love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony'. And also, in order to work through the inevitable peaks and troughs of family life, we need forgiveness and tolerance. Family

relationships can so easily be blighted and ruined by resentment, anger and the bearing of grudges. Indeed, these words apply more widely than simply to families.

We may, after all, be on our own and not have the close support of a family living with us. Even so, we need the community that our friends, our village, our neighbours can offer us. And there again if our lives are full of unresolved complaints and bitterness, we will not be able to enjoy and draw from this community.

So, as we give thanks for and celebrate the role of mothers on Mothering Sunday, the insights that our passages give us this morning are ones which mothers can exemplify but which all of us need. In different ways, we will all experience something of the extremes of life. And how shall we cope?

One word which seems to be in vogue at the moment is resilience. The point has been made in relation to young people that if all they know of life is success then they can be ill prepared to cope with the disappointments that will inevitably come to them further down the road. And for this, resilience, the ability to adapt and bounce back from life's misfortunes is indeed a valuable quality to have.

People try to nurture resilience in different ways. But for us as Christians we can point to our faith and the ability that this has to see us through difficult times. For, as we put on Christ's clothes of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience and love each day so these qualities will become deeply established within our daily lives and become the source of the resilience and balance that we need in order to face both the excitement and the challenges of life.

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- Giving thanks for the vocation of mothers and praying for them and us to have through Christ resilience and joy within our daily lives
- For continuing and new conflicts including those in the Ukraine and the Middle East especially the supply of humanitarian aid to Gaza
- 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 and children of North Cadbury church school

Hymn

One hymn which is a modern version of Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat is 'Tell out my soul.'

Services for this week and next

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Sunday 10 th March | 9.30 am | Communion, North Cheriton |
| Sunday 10 th March | 9.30 am | Matins, Blackford |
| Sunday 10 th March | 11.00 am | Mothering Sunday Service, Galhampton |
| Sunday 10 th March | 11.00 am | Sunday Worship, Holton |
| Sunday 17 th March | 9.30 am | Communion, Compton Pauncefoot |
| Sunday 17 th March | 11.00 am | Sunday Worship, North Cadbury |
| Sunday 17 th March | 11.00 am | Morning Service, Maperton |
| Sunday 17 th March | 4.00 pm | St Matthew Passion, Yarlington |

Excalibur online

The March edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes.

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)