

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 251**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

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

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot this Sunday.

## **Scripture Passages**

*Acts 3: 12-19*

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup> But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, <sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

<sup>17</sup> “And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup> In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out ...”

*Luke 24: 36-48*

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

<sup>37</sup> They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

<sup>40</sup> And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

<sup>41</sup> While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you - that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled."

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things."

## **Reflection**

If we had the skill and were able to do so, I wonder what colours we would use to depict Christ's Resurrection. Would they be very pale and muted? Or might they be bold and vivid primary colours? Might we see Christ as a whole blaze of dazzling white but without any real form or substance and without any distinguishing and recognisable physical features?

For, we can conceive the notion of an afterlife in very ethereal, insubstantial terms. In the Old Testament, for instance, Sheol is the place of the dead. This is depicted as a shadowy underworld, a place below the surface of the

earth which is one of dust, darkness, silence and forgetfulness. Yes, occasionally there are some signs of continuing life but nevertheless Sheol is a place of weakness and joylessness. Who would want to exchange this earthly existence in order to go there?

So, David in one of the Psalms speaks of his desire that God will not give him up to Sheol (Psalm 16:10). Sheol is at best a shadowy and insubstantial existence, one which it is difficult to desire. The appropriate colours to depict Sheol might indeed be pale, muted and subdued.

And indeed, when those whom we love have died after a long and difficult illness, it is difficult to want them brought back to life again in the same form as they had been just before their death, pale, weak and emaciated and a shadow of their former selves. Rather we want to see and enjoy them again at the peak of their powers, young and vibrantly alive.

So what does Christ's Resurrection promise us? It is, of course, impossible for us to imagine this. After all, the apostle Paul tells us that what God has prepared for us in the future is beyond the power of our eyes to see, our ears to hear or our hearts to conceive (1 Corinthians 2: 9).

Nevertheless, Christ's Resurrection does give some very important clues as to our future. You may, as I have done, asked yourself why there is a delay between Jesus rising from the dead and then ascending into heaven (which we will remember later on Ascension Day). Why should not one just have followed the other without any time in between?

However, this in between time is one of immense and indeed unique significance. It was the period during which Jesus at various times appeared to different groups of His disciples in a bodily resurrected form. These people who saw Him in this way then became unique witnesses of the Resurrection with the responsibility to record and pass on what they saw to future generations.

True, we now experience Jesus through Holy Spirit in our hearts and this is a great privilege to enjoy. Also, perhaps we have had at times an inner vision of Jesus, a sense that He is especially close to us. But we do not now live in a time in which the risen Jesus appears in bodily form to different groups of people. This period of time can never be repeated.

Nevertheless, it still remains a source of encouragement and inspiration for us today. This morning's gospel reading tells us of one of Jesus' Resurrection appearances to His disciples. It immediately follows the account of Jesus appearing on the road to Emmaus to two of these disciples. And if, on this occasion, we were to picture Jesus in bodily form I think we would indeed be using bold and vibrant primary colours rather than muted and subdued pastels.

For this is what Jesus encourages us and His disciples to do. The resurrection body of Jesus is clearly in some ways different from His earthly body. After all, the disciples on the road to Emmaus did not at first recognise the stranger who walked beside them. And Jesus is able to appear and disappear at will. Just as He disappears from the sight of the two disciples once they have reached Emmaus so He appears to this more extended group of disciples suddenly and without warning. Clearly, Jesus is free from the restrictions that confine and limit our bodies in this life.

No wonder that this sudden and unexpected appearance is greeted first of all with fear on the part of the disciples. So, Jesus needs to speak a message of peace and reassurance to them. Understandably perhaps the disciples think that they are seeing a ghost, a purely spiritual being which lacks any physical substance.

And it is this notion that Jesus is at pains to dispel. Jesus' resurrection body may be different but it is still recognisably a body with all its physical aspects and marks. He invites the disciples to look at His hands and feet

which they can touch, 'for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.'

And He follows this up with an even bolder and more striking challenge. He asks for something to eat and is given a piece of broiled fish which He proceeds to eat in their presence. At this point, we may well be struck by this detail of how the fish was cooked. Why broiled, we might ask, why not roast or boiled? There is no apparent symbolic answer to that question. Rather it is a detail which points to an eyewitness memory. The fish was broiled because this was how it was and this is what people remembered.

Jesus' resurrection body is one which is not subject to normal mortal limits. Also, it is now free from the terrible pain of the crucifixion. Nevertheless, the marks of Jesus's crucifixion and suffering still remain. They have not been erased as if such suffering no longer mattered. Indeed, on another occasion, Jesus speaks to Thomas of the marks of the nails in His hands and invites him to put his hand into His side (John 20:25-27).

So, the resurrection does not cancel out all our previous experiences. Rather, if we look at Jesus, we can have hope that although we will be freed from any pain that those experiences have brought us, nevertheless the part that they have played in shaping and transforming our characters so that we become more like Christ will, in some way, be recognised and affirmed.

As we turn to our reading from the book of Acts, we also find that our physical bodies are important as we experience the power of the Resurrection and of the Holy Spirit.

The context of this reading is that the apostles Peter and John have met a lame man begging at the gate to the Temple. Peter commands the man to stand up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Immediately the man stands up, his feet and ankles now miraculously whole and strong. Then he goes into the Temple praising God and everyone who sees him

recognises him as the same person who used to sit at the gate of the Temple and beg. Not surprisingly they are amazed.

In response to this amazement, Peter boldly asserts his confidence in the power of Jesus' resurrection to provide full physical healing. There is no secret and miraculous power that he or the other apostles possess. Rather, it is 'the faith that is through Jesus' which 'has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you'.

So far, we have stressed the material, physical aspect of Jesus' resurrection. And this is important because we can easily downplay this in favour of an ethereal, shadowy kind of continued existence. However, at the same time, we must not do so to the extent that we forget about the spiritual aspect of the resurrection.

After all, what good would perfect physical health and even being brought back to a vibrant bodily existence after death be if we were not also whole spiritually? If we continue to carry the burdens of grudges against other people which we are not willing to let go of, we would find that such a continued existence would be far from heavenly. Indeed, it might quickly become unbearable.

And so, both passages also express the spiritual message of the forgiveness of our sins through Christ's Cross and Resurrection.

The risen Jesus speaking to His disciples opens up the scriptures to them so that they can understand why He suffered and rose from the dead. This is so that repentance and the forgiveness of sins can be proclaimed in Jesus' names to all nations.

And the apostles give the same message to those who have witnessed the healing of the lame beggar. They urge them to understand the meaning of

Jesus' suffering and to repent and turn to God so that their sins might be wiped out.

So, the resurrection is not simply a message of great hope and encouragement. It also brings a very direct challenge as to how we live here and now. Do we choose to live in the vibrant colours of the resurrection or is our preference for a muted and shadowy half world?

For, in order to enjoy the forgiveness which Jesus has come to bring us, we also need to be prepared to forgive others. This is sometimes easier said than done as so often it can feel more attractive and even comfortable to hold on to the hurts which we have suffered in the past.

And yet equally the rewards of sharing in and enjoying the new life of the resurrection are immense and indeed immeasurable. In contrast to shadowy world of Sheol which he fears, David speaks of being shown the path of life and of being in God's presence where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16: 11). And likewise, Jesus speaks of life in all its fullness which He has come to bring (John 10: 10). Are we ready to embrace such a life?

*Tristram*

## **Points for Prayers**

- Enjoying and living in the bold and vibrant colours of Christ's Resurrection
- Victims and their families of Sydney knife attack
- For continuing and new conflicts including those in the Ukraine and the Middle East
- 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 as they return after the Easter holidays

## Hymn

One hymn for this Sunday which looks forward to the future kingdom of God is ‘Glorious things of thee are spoken.’

## Services for this week and next

Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlinton

## Excalibur online

The April edition of Excalibur has now been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://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](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)