

**The United Benefice of the parishes of Melbourne,
Smisby, Stanton by Bridge and Ticknall**



The Bulletin

A weekly publication for the Benefice

5th April 2020

Palm Sunday

**Join us for livestreamed worship on our Facebook page
(Melbourne Parish Church) Sunday at 10.30 am!**



Palm Sunday Bulletin 2020

We know very well that this Holy Week and Easter will be very different to the one we were planning and expecting (and please see lower down this article for details of our Holy Week services that will be on our Facebook page) but we still walk in the light and hope of Jesus Christ.

Olivier Latry is one of the finest organists in the world. He is based at Notre Dame, Paris (and for them it was certainly something of a miracle that their Grand Organ seems to have survived the fire) and is much in demand for his improvisation skills all around the world. The day after the terrible terrorist attacks on Paris in 2015, Latry was on duty in the Cathedral. Instead of an offertory hymn as part of the Mass, he began playing an improvisation, a piece played without sheet music. It began fairly inconspicuously but you soon began to realise what he was actually playing – the French National anthem. The improvisation got louder and louder as the full might of the organ was deployed. Even if you are not that keen on organ music, it is worth a listen (I'll put the youtube link on the church Facebook page, too) at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN19Zq3Bfu0>

What Latry so movingly succeeds in doing is to speak of defiance and hope in the midst of corporate and collective lament.

Over Holy Week and Easter, our calling is to walk ever more closely with Jesus. We will journey with him into Jerusalem, then see his betrayal not long after, we will see him share the ultimate family meal with his friends and then share in his anguish and agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. After his arrest and phony trial, Pontius Pilate shows a very early example of handwashing that sends Jesus back out of Jerusalem to the full horror of the cross at Golgotha.

We know well that the story doesn't end there. On Easter Day, love bursts from the tomb to reboot the whole of creation. The sacred drama of the Gospel accounts gives us not just a framework but **the** framework on which we can hang all of our worst nightmares and brightest dreams; all our anxieties and our hopes. Jesus, in sharing our lives, shares our vulnerability and even shares our death to pave the way for our eternity with him.

So, yes, Easter Day this year won't quite be what we planned or expected but is still a gift of hope each and every day – in each of our homes, in each of our lives. Yes, sadly 'for a season' our church buildings may be empty, but so is the tomb.

Our services for Palm Sunday and Holy Week (all on the Facebook page 'Melbourne Parish Church')

Palm Sunday 1030 am Eucharist on the Facebook page, there will be a picture of a Palm Cross. Although we can't distribute Palm Crosses this year, please do download and print off the image, cut it out and display at home! There will be a prayer of blessing in our order of service.

Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week at 7.30 pm two brief services of prayer and reflection for Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday Eucharist at 7.00 pm a service remembering the Last Supper after which Jesus is betrayed.

Good Friday - The Last Hour 2 pm we remember the crucifixion of Jesus.

Easter Day Festival Eucharist 1030 am the big celebration! See how many 'alleluias' we can include in one service!

It has been profoundly moving to hear stories of hope across our communities. These are testing times during which we are so grateful for the sacrifices being made by our NHS, our key frontline workers and so many others – may they all feature often in our prayers. Please also know that I am praying for you each day and am only a phone call away.

Every blessing,

Steve

Canon David Edwards' thoughts on the Lent Course 2020

The Lent Course is based around Bp. Stephen Cottrell's book '*I Thirst: The Cross – The great triumph of love,*' published by Hodder and Stoughton (ISBN 978 1 529 36092 9). If you haven't seen or read this book and are interested Steve may have a few copies.

So here are some thoughts about **Chapter 5 – Enduring Thirst.**

It was September 1963 and I had just started working as an unqualified teacher in a primary school. Disaster struck, the staffroom kettle failed and there was no tea for morning break. The school secretary rang the local education office to ask if we could have a new one, but the vagaries of funding were such that we could only have one 'for first aid purposes.' According to the official she spoke to; teachers were not entitled to a drink at break time. So, she asked for a first aid kettle and it arrived next morning.

Teaching, when you are on your feet all day and using your voice so much, is thirsty work. I suppose that some people could go all day without a warm drink, but most of us would be really thirsty by the morning break.

Stephen Cottrell begins chapter 5 with a story which mixes thirst and a personal disaster. Forgetting quite how long his European journey would be he didn't pack enough drinks; and by the time the coach stopped he and his companion were gasping for the water that was on offer in the shop. Reflecting upon this he said, my suffering was nothing compared to what Jesus suffered during crucifixion.

You will recall that a soldier offered Jesus some vinegar to drink and as a child I always thought it was a horrible thing to do. But Cottrell reminds us that it was given with compassion and would have deadened some of the pain.

It is an example of the 'tenacity of love' Cottrell spoke about in the last chapter; Jesus accepts the drink in the spirit it was offered and shows

compassion to those around him even in the extremis of his dying. But don't see this thirst as a single, one-off act; Cottrell reminds us that the Cross and the thirst are both signs of God's passionate and ongoing involvement in the world.

So, asks Cottrell, can we be sure that we would offer Jesus a drink if we met him? And then that little phrase 'the least' pops up, a reminder that when we offer care, love and compassion to anyone we are offering it to Jesus. 'Because you did it to the least of my brethren.'

And that phrase 'the least' is a tricky concept because from our western position we find it difficult to see ourselves as 'the least'. It is people out there who need help and understanding, not us. We fall all too easily into thinking of the people of developing countries as being in need of the help we can offer; do we ever consider that they might just have something to offer us? Love and care is a two-way process; a mutual sharing of what we and others have.

It is something that some people, for example a brother-in-law of mine, are having to accept during the coronavirus pandemic. The most vulnerable citizens are being shielded as far as possible from the effects of the virus and some of them will, for the first time, find themselves dependent on others for the delivery of food and medicines.

If 'the least' is a tricky subject, what about the judgement of God? In our modern world we tend to fight shy of that concept, yet to the people of the middle ages the judgement of God was something they fully expected to happen. The church walls bore testament to that, the pictures of what judgement might look like, angels leading the blessed to heaven and demons pulling the damned into hell, were there for all to see.

Charles Dickens is using this idea in *A Christmas Carol* when he has Jacob Marley visit Ebenezer Scrooge from the depths of Hell. Here is a man doomed to an eternity of sorrows because he had no compassion for others when he was alive; and the chains being prepared for Scrooge are already even longer and will be more so unless he grasps the chance of redemption.

Judgement and redemption are two sides of the same coin. And the parables that Matthew uses to precede the passion narrative continue to underline this. They remind people not to put off doing something for God until it is too late; they remind us that we all have to live out the love of God in the realities of our lives not in some religious world divorced from reality; and they remind us that we should not neglect the gifts we have been given but use them to reveal the love and grace of God to others.

There is no doubt, says Stephen Cottrell, that the cost of discipleship, the cost of loving others, is uncomfortable and challenging. We sign up to the concept of doing something beautiful for God, but don't always find the reality so appealing. We can come up with answers to the questions but living these out is so much harder.

So, what does Stephen Cottrell think that Christians might do to identify and deal with the issues that are troubling our world? Of course, he wrote this book (and revised it) in a time when the safety of the entire world wasn't being threatened by coronavirus so nothing like that appears in the text. But we are aware of it and our experiences of lockdown, of the serious illness suffered by so many people, of the seemingly random way in which death takes one and not the other, of the way in which it has disrupted and destroyed the world of work and finance, cannot but make us question our beliefs and our ways of being and doing church.

Cottrell gives us ten issues where we might effectively make changes in our own lives or encourage these in the societies in which we live. They are good but by today's standards they no longer seem as radical as they might have been when the book was written. Perhaps the church, nationally, diocesan, but more significantly at Benefice and Parish level, might begin to think of ten issues that we feel need to change or be grappled with as we move into a post-coronaviral world and begin to interpret our faith in the light of the lessons we have learned?

Cottrell ends this chapter with a quote from the Catholic writer Anthony de Mello. He came once to talk to a conference of Diocesan Children's Work Advisers (which was my job at the time), and he spoke with a quiet authority about helping children come to faith. So, let me reprint Cottrell's chosen quote here.

I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was, 'Lord, give me the energy to change the world.'

As I approached middle age and realised half my life was gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to, 'Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come into contact with me. Just my family and friends and I shall be satisfied.'

Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, my one prayer is, 'Lord, give me the grace to change myself.' If I had prayed this from the start, I would not have wasted my life.

Message from Bill Cummings (former resident of Melbourne and great ringer of bells): Hi, Kate. Nice to read the bulletin, as always, this time round being particularly poignant, of course. If you encounter bell ringers ambling about, you can share that my family and I are change ringing

handbells here at home just about every evening. It's a great way to take our minds off of everything else. It's also revealing how nice it is to have less mental clutter in our lives. We are able to concentrate better now than when the rest of modern-day life is whirring around us.

Message from Pool Cottage: Thank you very much for these Kate (bulletin and Order of Service), the residents really appreciate them and we once again look forward to Steve's service tomorrow. [If you would like a bulletin or Order of Service, please ring 862153, leave a message and I'll get back to you]

Link to a newspaper article:

Roger Kington sent a very interesting article to Steve. Here is the link:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/if-supermarkets-can-stay-open-so-should-churches-7hfb89nnw?shareToken=9695335c06b22af50b0cdc0b1e2cbdff>

A pattern for daily prayer, so that, at home or at church, we can pray together:

Monday: Those in great poverty or need.

Tuesday: Those who have asked for our prayers: Ruth Barkaway, Anne Brazier, Roo Hubbard, David Ingram, Bob Smith and Margaret Stockley. Those in Derby's hospitals and hospices. All at Pool Cottage.

Wednesday: Our group of parishes.

Thursday: The church worldwide. All Christian people. The local church. The Anglican Communion.

Friday: All in need, especially the hungry, poor and homeless.

The Departed

In our prayers this week, we can remember those who have died recently, and those whose anniversaries occur near this time among them Geoffrey Ogden Holt, Alan Lott, Maureen Birkinshaw and Dorothy Robey.

The Reading for today:

First Reading: *Matthew 21.1-11*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately. This took place to fulfil what had been spoken

through the prophet, saying,
‘Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,
‘Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

Additional Collect:

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.

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