

REFLECTIONS

When I first started work, training to be a marine underwriter at Lloyd's of London, I began to attend lunch time services at a well-known City of London church. I was soon "cornered" and taken to a church weekend at a Cambridge college and was required to stand up in front of 100 people whom I did not know to make a declaration of faith. I was urged to do the same in various ways at my place of work. It nearly drove me away from the Christian faith. By contrast, Mark, in his Gospel passage appointed for today makes much of what biblical scholars call the "Messianic Secret". This is the way in which Jesus conceals his divinity during his ministry of teaching and healing.

Those who are healed are often told not to speak about it - though they usually disobey the command. All the three Gospels that tell of the Transfiguration report that the disciples said nothing about the amazing sight which they had just witnessed. There is, in many of us, an inherent reserve of speaking about our faith. This does not contradict the duty of mission, of working to bring others to Christ, but is a warning against speaking without consideration. A brash approach, demanding to know whether a person is "saved", has often done more harm and closed the ears to the good news of salvation. The Gospel is of course for all but it is received individually.

Temperament and circumstance combine to make the best opportunity. Holy wisdom should teach us when to speak and when to be silent - tact is a Christian virtue. It is the message of a loving, caring response without pious words that often prepares for the word to be spoken, as I found at the end of my secular career when I wore my clerical collar in the money markets of the City of London.

Michael Lovegrove

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ONLINE

Services in church remain suspended until further notice. The following services are available across the team - full details on the website and the email bulletin. They will all take place on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

SUNDAY

St Mary's Saffron Walden

10.00am Holy Communion President: Michael Lovegrove on Zoom and YouTube

St James' Swards End

9.30am Simple Communion President: Chris Bishop

St Botolph's Hadstock

9.30am Holy Communion 1662 President: Paula Griffiths

All Saints' Ashdon

9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

St Mary's Debden

9.15am Sunday Praise Leader: Ursula Lyons
Preacher: John Saxon

Cam Villages

10.00am Holy Communion President: Alex Jeewan
Preacher: John Risby

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer (Zoom) Leader: Mike Felgate

ASH WEDNESDAY

St Mary's Saffron Walden

9.30am Holy Communion + Ashes President: Alex Jeewan on Zoom and Youtube

Ashdon/Hadstock

7.30pm Holy Communion + Ashes President: Paula Griffiths
Preacher: Caroline Curren

St Mary's Debden

7.00pm Holy Communion + Ashes President: John Saxon

See St Mary's Church, SW, website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.



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The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN,
WIMBISH, DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Welcome to our services today

Sunday next before Lent

14th February 2021

Collect

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: 2 Corinthians 4. 3-6

Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Gospel: Mark 9. 2-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Post Communion

Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ: may we who are partakers at his table reflect his life in word and deed, that all the world may know his power to change and save. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Jeremy and Alison Trew and their family as they move to Saffron Walden
In February please pray for: **Our Lady of Compassion Roman Catholic Church, St Thomas More School**
The family and friends of those who have died recently:
Agnes Boreham, Reginald Howe, Jane Benson & John Lebus

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,
In the liturgical calendar the 14th of February is shown as "The Sunday Next Before Lent" and in the list of "Lesser Festivals" under the same date we also see "St Valentine, Martyr at Rome Circa 269". It is of course Valentine's Day that is widely marked in the secular world.
I know little or nothing about St Valentine so I looked him up in "Butler's Lives of the Saints", here we read that despite his popularity virtually nothing is known of the historical Valentine. For a long time there were apparently two, one a martyr at Rome, the second a bishop and martyr at Terni, north of Rome.
There are various possibilities connecting the feast day with lovers and one of these is that it could have been a Christian takeover of the Roman feast of Lupercalia. The massive card and flower industry of today may seem to have been with us forever but according to "Butler's Lives" it is a recent innovation. "Perhaps-dare one say? - its revival is more commercial than devotional and the Roman Lupercalia may have regained lost ground!"
The Greeks had several words for love which include Phileo - affection for friends, Stergo - family affection, eros - sexual love, and agape which we may translate as "God's love to men". In Latin the word is "caritas".
In Christian thought, Agape is the essential quality underlying God's actions and our response to them. It is distinguished from dutiful affection and passionate emotion and is seen more as a matter of will than of emotions. It is selflessness from which the element of sacrifice is never far removed. For Christ, love was the basis of his commandments - love God, love your neighbour. In the early church there was often a common religious meal which was held either before or after the Eucharist (with which it should not be confused). Many of us, of course, have enjoyed Christian fellowship over an agape supper.
St Valentine's Day reminds us that the human heart was made for love. Our love of Christ transforms what we love and the way we love. When we live by faith it blesses us with the Gospel realism that we need to embrace Jesus Christ as our only Master and his cross as our true home.
Happy Valentine's Day - with my love and prayers.
Michael Lovegrove

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Kindle, O Lord, in our hearts, we pray, The flame of that love which never ceases, That in may burn in us and give light to others, May we shine forever in your Temple, Set on fire with that eternal light of yours Which puts to flight the darkness of this world; In the name of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. (Source unknown)

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Mon 15th	Morning Psalm 44 & John 3:1-21 Evening Psalm 47
Tue 16th	Morning Psalm 48 & John 3:22-end Evening Psalm 50 & Galatians 2:1-10
Ash Wed 17th	Morning Psalm 38 & 1 Timothy 6:6-19 Evening Psalm 51
Thurs 18th	Morning Psalm 77 & John 4:1-26 Evening Psalm 74
Fri 19th	Morning Psalm 3 & John 4:27-42 Evening Psalm 31
Sat 20th	Morning Psalm 71 & John 4:43-end Evening Psalm 73

NEWS

ONLINE SERVICES are listed on the back page. Full joining details are available on the weekly email bulletin and on the website. Please email Dawn if you would like to be added to the bulletin distribution list.

LIVE WORSHIP by phone - you don't need a computer or tablet to join our services from home. If you would like to know more please contact Judith Hasler on 525041 or John Saxon on 541619.

PRIVATE PRAYER St Mary's, Saffron Walden is closed during the current lockdown. All Saints, Ashdon, remains open every day. St Botolph's, Hadstock will be open by appointment only.

THE 'ACCOMPANIED JOURNEY' LENT MEETINGS looking at 'Living His Story' by Hannah Steele will run twice: on Thursday afternoons and evenings, starting **Thursday 18th February**. Joining details will be sent on Monday 15th February to those who have registered interest.
Caroline Curren

CAM VILLAGES LENT COURSE - What on Earth is the Church for? A reminder and a challenge as we remember God's purposes for His church. Open to everyone - weekly meetings in Lent on Zoom on Wednesdays from 7.30-8.30pm starting on **24th February**. Please register your interest with Alex Jeewan vicar.camvillages@gmail.com

LIVE LENT Booklet of Daily Reflections still available from the Parish Office—contact Dawn if you would like one.
QUINQUA QUIZ IN AID OF THE BISHOP'S LENT APPEAL will be held on Zoom on **Saturday 27th February** at 7.30pm. More information on p 19 of the Parish News. Contact Chris Bishop 01799 523722 to register.

DATES FOR DIARY:

Wednesday 3rd March 7.30pm Institution, Induction and Installation of Rev. Jeremy Trew as Team Rector and Area Dean by the Bishop of Colchester and the Archdeacon of Stansted. This service will be livestreamed to YouTube from St Mary's, Saffron Walden.

Saturday 13th March A LENT ZOOM QUIET MORNING from 10am (Zoom opens from 9:50) to noon led by the Rev Hilary Davey. **LOVE IN THE TIME OF COVID:** finding God's Hope in difficult times. This will be an opportunity to reflect on our personal experiences, good and bad, of this last year; ponder what we have learnt and want to retain and find hope for a still uncertain future. All are welcome. *Sue Walker*

TRANSITION PROJECT Assisting the presently unemployed find work. The Project, which for 10 years or more has been a stand-alone outreach arm of this Church, is now able to offer its consultant's services on the less restricted basis, being between Mondays and Fridays between 10am and 4pm each week. The contact telephone number is 07901 173763 and please leave a message if a call is not answered. Outreach will be assisted further by the local Foodbank which will insert the Project's flyer in every food parcel, presently numbering around 40 each week.
Anthony Armon-Jones

PARISH OFFICE HOURS The Parish Administrator is available by phone or email on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9.30am - 12 noon. The office is not currently open to personal callers.

MINISTRY TEAM

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Revd Alex Jeewan	01799 531153
Revd John Saxon	01799 541619
Revd Dr Caroline Curren	01799 584839