

# End the Week with CME - May 16, 2008

16th May 2008

Welcome to End the Week with CME! This weekly email is sent automatically to Clergy and Readers in the diocese (if you don't want to receive it, please send an email to [CovEW-unsubscribe@lists.covlec.org](mailto:CovEW-unsubscribe@lists.covlec.org)) but anyone is welcome to subscribe to the list, and we are especially keen to pass it on to any interested lay people, especially those who may have responsibility for preaching. To subscribe they simply need to email [CovEW-subscribe@lists.covlec.org](mailto:CovEW-subscribe@lists.covlec.org).

## Prayer Request

Please pray for Yvonne Richmond's family (Canon for Mission at the Cathedral). Yvonne's husband Simon died suddenly on Monday. This is obviously a huge blow to them all, so please remember Yvonne, Melissa, Ollie and Luke in your prayers over the next few weeks.

## Coming Up

### Concert in aid of the St Nicholas Church (Radford Semele) Restoration Fund

Thursday 29 May, 7.45pm at St Peter's Church, Barford

Music by Corelli, Bach and Handel will be performed by James Hewitt (violin) and Mark Dupere (cello) - both of whom are from the Royal Conservatoire, The Hague - and Chris Farr (organ).

Tickets are £8.00 (including a glass of wine) and are available through Chris & Alex Farr (01926 620117) or at the door.

### Women Bishops - but what kind?

A study day for women and men. 10am - 3pm, Monday 9 June at Offa House.

Legislation for the ordination of women bishops will come before the General Synod in the near future. It is a timely moment to ask what we expect of bishops in general, and what we think women bishops might bring to the role. What kind of leadership is appropriate for the church of the future?

The day will be chaired by Katrina Scott (Diocesan Adviser for Women's Ministry), and there will be input from Rosie Ward (Leadership Development Adviser, CPAS). Cost: £30 (including lunch). Grants for half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through [sarah.palmer@covcofe.org](mailto:sarah.palmer@covcofe.org).

## **Future of the Church of England**

Tuesday 10 June, 7.30pm at St Nicholas Church, Kenilworth.

The Deaneries of Coventry South and Kenilworth have invited Canon Dr Christina Baxter, Lay Chair of General Synod, to give her thoughts on the future of the Church of England. Christina has been in post since 1995, and has also been a member of Archbishops' Council and its Finance Committee since 1999. She has been a member of the Women Bishops Working Party since 2003.

If you would like further details, please contact Audrey Hopley at [hobley78@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hobley78@tiscali.co.uk).

## **Annual Regional Training Partnership (RTP) Forum**

Saturday 14 June, 10am - 3pm, at Droitwich Spa Methodist Church. (Lunch is included.)

This year's West Midland Regional Training Partnership Forum, will look at approaches to theological reflection and will be led by Professor Stephen Pattison from Birmingham and the Revd Judith Thompson from Worcester. For more information about the day, please contact Jenny Harris at [jenny.harris@birmingham.anglican.org](mailto:jenny.harris@birmingham.anglican.org) or on 0121 426 0437.

## **Subverting the Empire: Romans Disarmed**

Blah . . . is a series of conversations on mission, worship, church and Christianity in today's rapidly changing culture.

CMS have planned a 2008 'blah tour', and have invited Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmaat over from Canada

to present it. "Romans Disarmed" will take place in Birmingham on Tuesday 17 June, 10am until 4pm at Birmingham Cathedral.

For more information, or to book online, go to [www.blahonline.net](http://www.blahonline.net).

## **Unity in Diversity: celebrating the breadth of Reader Ministry**

The Central Readers' Council National Conference will be held Friday 12 - Sunday 14 September 2008 at the University of North Wales, Bangor.

The keynote speaker will be Canon Dr Christina Baxter CBE, and the Principal of St Johns College, Nottingham will be leading an exploration of 1 Corinthians 12. There will also be a number of seminars, led by Readers who are involved in different aspects of ministry outside the church, such as prisons, hospices, bereavement, education etc.

A core part of the weekend will be worship and fellowship, and throughout the weekend there will be an exhibition of various resources relevant to Reader Ministry.

Cost: £170 per head if you book before 30 June / £180 per head for bookings after 30 June.

For more information, contact Alan Wakely, CRC Secretary, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ, [crcsec@c-of-e.org.uk](mailto:crcsec@c-of-e.org.uk) or Susan Salt, Chair of the organising committee, Christ Church Vicarage, Meadows Avenue, Thornton Cleve Leys, Lancashire FY5 2TW, [nsalt@waitrose.com](mailto:nsalt@waitrose.com).

[www.readers.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org)

## **Notes on the Gospel Readings for Trinity 1 (Sunday May 25, 2008) Matthew 5.38-end**

### **Love your enemies**

'The sun shines on the righteous' goes the traditional saying, but it's a misquotation. Jesus didn't say it: instead he stressed that the sun shines on both the righteous and the unrighteous. God doesn't play favourites. Rather, the challenge is for followers of Jesus to be distinctive in the world despite receiving no

special treatment.

This passage and next week's are the only representatives of the Sermon on the Mount in this year's lectionary readings, which may seem a strange decision given the influence the sermon has had on the Christian tradition. But it does give us the opportunity to see the Sermon in its context within Matthew's gospel: one amongst five sermons or blocks of teaching which Jesus gives, according to Matthew, deliberately designed to present Jesus as the new Moses, offering a new 'five books' as Moses had done.

These sermons are concerned with how to live as followers of Jesus in a hostile world. The first, the sermon on the mount, is about discipleship (5.1-7.28); the others are about mission (10.1-11.1); kingdom (13.1-53); community (18.1-19.1); and the end-times (24.3-26.1). Each ends with a variation on the phrase 'when Jesus finished saying these things...' They are the heart of Matthew's gospel because they represent his substantial additions to Mark's gospel, and make his book into a manual of discipleship.

Practical issues are never far from Matthew's mind, and he reflects the part of Jesus' mission which was concerned with making a real difference in the world in a way that was thoroughly in tune with the best rabbinic teaching of the day. Next week's readings pick up on the same theme, but in this passage Jesus tackles the thorny question of how you react in harsh circumstances. He is in dialogue with the Law of Moses (v.38) but he wants to redefine it. For Matthew Jesus is not a second Moses: it is rather that Moses was the forerunner of Jesus in a similar way to John the Baptist and the prophets. Jesus is indisputably greater and brings the fulfilment of the law (see Matt. 5.17).

The Law said 'an eye for an eye' but Jesus says 'do not stand against evil' (v.39) which seems to mean in this context, do not repay evil with evil, as the Law allowed. Gandhi famously remarked that applying an eye for an eye would ultimately leave the whole world blind, however liberal it was originally (only an eye for an eye). Jesus seeks to break the vicious circle which even this teaching would perpetuate. Don't answer evil on its own terms. A slap on the right cheek could only be delivered in one of two ways; by the back of someone's right hand, in which case it is a dismissive gesture, putting someone firmly in their place, or by the left (and unclean) hand which was a gross insult. Offering yourself for a further blow emphasises that the first has not had the intended effect. Not paying back implies a refusal to engage in the game that's being played - and allows you to claim the moral high ground (see also Rom 12.20-21).

Next Jesus tackles debt. According to the Law, the clothes might be taken off someone's back in repayment of a loan but not so as to leave them destitute (Deut 24.12-13). Exacting this penalty can be resisted too, says Jesus. Offering all your clothes takes the game to a level of absurdity which turns the tables on the one enforcing the Law. Then again, taking a soldier's pack an extra mile invites the absurd image of the soldier running after you, pleading to have his pack back. And who looks silly then?

The vein of absurdity which runs through some of the parables (the speck and log, for instance) is given full rein here, but in actions rather than words. The vicious circle is broken because such encounters would be funny ones to anyone looking on. But the absurdity has a point. Those who followed Jesus are not the favoured few, but those whose weakness shows the power of God. They are like everyone else - the sun doesn't shine on them to the exclusion of others (v. 45). What distinguishes them is that they live according to other standards - the standards of the end-time. For when Jesus calls on them to 'be perfect' the word he uses is *teleios*, that is, having the end in view and seeking the kind of just world that God is bringing in his kingdom. Loving your enemies (v.44) is a means of drawing them into the kingdom, helping them to see what its reality might be like.

What are the issues we face that might raise the same issues? They may be the challenges of lifestyle and materialism, or they may be, for some, frighteningly similar to those Jesus spoke about. Jimmy Mizen, the 16 year old killed last week in South London, died because he refused to get into a fight. He and his family come from a strong Roman Catholic background. In the midst of their tragedy maybe a light shines out, so that others 'may see your good works and glorify your Father, who is in heaven' (Matt. 5.16)

## And Finally...

Ogden Nash's take on the "sun shines on the righteous" saying:

The rain it raineth on the just

And also on the unjust fella

But mostly on the just, because -

The unjust pinched the just's umbrella.

**That's all folks!**

**Richard**

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