

End the Week with CME - March 12, 2010

12th Mar 2010

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) 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.

Festival of Preaching

There will be a Festival of Preaching at Coventry Cathedral on Saturday 12 June 2010, from 10am until 5pm. Nora Tubbs-Tisdale (author and Professor of Homiletics at Yale University) will be giving the keynote address, and there will be a selection of seminars to choose from on different aspects of preaching.

The Festival will be followed on Sunday 13 June by special preaching services at 10.30am and 6.30pm.

All clergy, Readers and PTOs should now have received a copy of the leaflet and booking form in the post. However, you can also download a Festival of Preaching leaflet [here](#), and you can download the Coventry booking form [here](#).

There is no charge for clergy and Readers from the Coventry Diocese, and the cost for all other participants is £30 (please see the booking form for details).

CME Events Coming Up this year

April 22, 2010 - Seeking the Angel of the Church

'To the angel of the church write...'

Churches and communities, like individuals, have their own character and spirit. The reason long term transformation is often missing is because the spirit has not been named and ministered to. Based on the work of Walter Wink, a day exploring the name and character and 'angel' of our communities and how to minister to them.

A study day with David Runcorn, Thursday 22 April at Red Hill Christian Centre, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

April 27, 2010 - Learning from Luke (almost fully booked)

A Bible Reflection day with Paula Gooder and Richard Cooke. Tuesday 27 April at Offa House, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

May 26, 2010 - Safeguarding Children and Young People

This training will be based on the new Diocesan Guidelines and will cover all aspects of safeguarding, including types and indicators of abuse, how sex offenders operate, what to do if a disclosure is made, making a referral to Children's Social Care, ex-offenders in the Church, safe recruitment, Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The training day will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

10am-3pm at St George's, Rugby. This training is free. Please book through cme@covcofe.org.

July 6, 2010 - Spanish Mystics

A Spirituality Reflection Day with Ruth Tuschling, Tuesday 6 July at Offa House, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

July 15, 2010 - Safeguarding Children and Young People

This training will be based on the new Diocesan Guidelines and will cover all aspects of safeguarding, including types and indicators of abuse, how sex offenders operate, what to do if a disclosure is made, making a referral to Children's Social Care, ex-offenders in the Church, safe recruitment, Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The training day will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

10am-3pm at Red Hill Christian Centre. This training is free. Please book through cme@covcofe.org.

Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship

These are the BCD modules that are coming up before the summer. If you know anyone who might be interested in any of these, please pass the details on. Full details about the Bishop's Certificate can be found at <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/training/>. Places on any of the modules can be booked by emailing cme@covcofe.org.

Where Do I Fit? Finding Your Place in God's World

This module tries to answer the questions: 'Where do I fit in?' 'How has God gifted me?', and 'What might God be calling me to in the future?' and is led by Susan Mileham (Vocation Advisers' Team Leader) and Revd John Parker (Vocation Adviser & Team Vicar, Rugby Team Ministry).

4 May, 11 May, 18 May & 8 Jun, 15 Jun, 22 June 2010 (Tuesdays) 7.30 - 9.30pm at Leamington Spa, St Mark.

Unlocking the Story of Your Church

Whether your church is a historic building or quite recently built, this module will help you to understand the history which has made the building what it is today, and also help you to tell its story, as well as the story of the people who have worshipped in it. The module is led by Richard Cooke and Helen McGowan (Divine Inspiration).

8 May & 10 Jul 2010 (Saturdays) 9.30am - 3.30pm at Tredington, St Gregory.

Learning to Preach (almost fully booked)

This module is suitable for anyone who feels a call to make a contribution to the work of their church through occasional preaching and is led by Revd Dr Richard Cooke.

10 May, 17 May, 24 May & 14 Jun, 21 Jun, 28 Jun 2010 (Mondays) 7.30 - 9.30pm at CPAS, Athena Drive, Tachbrook Park, Warwick CV34 6NG.

New Understanding the Bible

This is a two day module which will introduce you to the overall framework of the story of the Bible and look at some issues of how we interpret the text of the Bible in the twenty-first century.

22 May 2010 (Saturday) 9.30am - 3.30pm at St. Peter's Church, Wellesbourne

19 June 2010 (Saturday) 9.30am - 3.30pm at St. Peter's Church Centre, Wellesbourne.

Other events

Reader Fellowship Evening

This is a reminder that there is a Reader Fellowship Evening at Offa House, 7.30pm next Thursday, 18 March. Please let Chris Haines know as soon as possible if you wish to attend. You can email Chris at chris@haines.uk.com or call her on 01788 576279.

'Christianity & Economics' - invitation to Readers

Readers are invited to join the Readers-in-Training for an open event, which will be a talk on Christianity and Economics by John Hughes. This will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 22 March at CPAS, Athena Drive, Tachbrook Park, Warwick CV34 6NG. There will be no charge.

Please let Chris Haines know if you wish to attend. You can email Chris at chris@haines.uk.com or call her on 01788 576279.

'Wisdom from Warwick' - Lent addresses 2010

14th March (Lent 4) Theology of Life? Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide The Revd Mark Bratton

21st March (Lent 5) Richard Beauchamp: 'Tomb thoughts from abroad' Prof Julian Gardner

28th March (Palm Sunday) Wisdom from Warwick: Links & Loose-ends? The Revd Dr Vaughan Roberts

All 6.30pm at the Collegiate Parish Church of St Mary. Each Address is part of a service of Choral Evensong and is followed by coffee and an opportunity to question the speaker.

Going for Growth

This course about how churches grow today is for all clergy and other senior leaders who wish to see their churches flourish and grow numerically and spiritually.

Leader: The Venerable Bob Jackson

Venue: St John's College Nottingham, Chilwell Lane, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3DS

Dates Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 5pm 28th April to 26th May 2010

Fee: £80

Booking deadline: Friday 16 April 2010. Places MUST be booked and paid for in advance.

To book: contact Anna Leyden on 0115 925 1114 for a booking form or download from www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk or use this link.

For details of all the events coming up, which have been advertised in recent editions of End the Week, please go to <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/learning/trainingstudy/>

Notes on the Gospel Readings for Sunday 21 March (Lent 5) John 12. 1-8

Dead Man Walking

It would have been the smell that hit you first. Not only filling the house where the dinner took place, but following Jesus around for the rest of a week that ended with his crucifixion. Anointed for burial six days before his body was entombed, for a week in Jerusalem the odour around him would have shouted out to anyone who came near, 'this man is destined to die'.

For this was not any perfume, but the distinctive and expensively luxurious 'oil of nard' (v.3), probably mixed with the oil of pistachio nuts (pistike, v.3, often translated 'pure'). The costliest of this oil came all the way along the spice route from India. It's perhaps not surprising that Judas doesn't get the point. To use a whole pound of such stuff was, in the context of the circles in which Jesus and his disciples moved, quite unbelievable. Judas's valuation is that it was worth 300 denarii, and since one denarius was reckoned to be equivalent to a labourer's day wage, Mary had poured out perhaps £20-30,000 at today's prices. Not so much extravagant, Judas seems to have thought, as unhinged.

That Mary should have had such a valuable commodity in her possession strikes us as strange. It may make us re-evaluate our picture of the house at Bethany where Mary lived with her sister Martha and her brother Lazarus as a simple peasant home. There is some evidence that Jesus did have wealthy supporters, many of whom were women. Luke hints tantalisingly at this (Luke 8.3), while all the gospels offer a glimpse of the highly-placed Joseph of Arimathea being a closet disciple (Mark 15.43); John includes Nicodemus alongside Joseph as a sympathiser (John 19.39). Jesus' encounters with such people may have included a significant challenge to give away much of the wealth they owned, as in the story of the young man, named by Luke as a 'ruler', who asks what he should do to inherit eternal life and is told to give all he has to the poor (Mark 10.17-22, Luke 18.18-23). Perhaps significantly this young man is described, uniquely by Mark, as being 'loved' by Jesus, which may be echoed in John's description of Jesus' feelings for Lazarus (John 11.3, 36); could the young ruler of the Synoptics be the Lazarus of John's Gospel? Overall, it seems likely that, since Jesus and the disciples apparently stayed with the family at Bethany for the whole of Passover week, their accommodation was substantial, and the fact that Lazarus was 'reclining' (v.2) at the meal with Jesus implies

a relatively affluent social setting.

Whatever the truth of these possibilities, in the story of the anointing, the house at Bethany has become the venue for what seems to have been a feast given 'in Jesus' honour' (v.2, NIV). This is, most obviously, a response of gratitude for the restoration of Lazarus to life, a celebration. Several features of the story clearly relate to what we can glean of the relationship between Martha and Mary according to Luke's Gospel. Martha is again preoccupied with the catering, while Mary is attentive to Jesus (v.2, cf. Luke 10.38-41). The added edge in this story is that, in the setting of a celebratory feast, Mary makes a scene. This should be a day to thank God for the miraculous raising of Lazarus, but Mary turns it prematurely into a wake – with the one who is dead as the chief guest.

The story of the raising of Lazarus is the hinge point on which John's Gospel turns; the last and greatest of the seven signs which Jesus performs prior to his own resurrection. It is also, as Thomas gloomily notes, the event which leads to Jesus' own death (John 11.16). In other words, Jesus knows that by bringing Lazarus back to life he will condemn himself to death. As a result of this miracle the authorities determine to do away with Jesus once and for all (John 11.53).

Lazarus, freshly returned to life, and Martha, delighted to have her brother back, do not see this. But Mary does. The shadow of the tomb, which has lifted from Lazarus, now looms over Jesus. And so she pours the oil of burial over Jesus' feet and looses her hair as only a woman in the grip of frenzied grief would do. The joy of celebration turns dramatically to ashes. We can imagine the assembled guests being stunned into silence. This is just not appropriate behaviour.

Judas breaks the silence. How come this incredibly expensive perfume was there in the house? Shouldn't it have been given away to help the poor? A gesture of this kind, the guests might have reflected, was unheard of in their circles. It was more the kind of thing that might happen in the heedless kingly luxury of the Herod family's palaces.

Yet, as in Luke's story of his encounter with the Bethany family, Jesus takes Mary's side. She's got it right, and has seen the truth. The week leading up to Passover will not be a triumph for Jesus but a long journey down the road to dusty death. Giving to the poor, and their special place close to God's heart, was a hallmark of Jesus' ministry. Yet even so central a part of the message of God's Kingdom would go on hold for this week, for they would not always have Jesus with them (v.8).

Shakespeare's Richard II reflected that 'Not all the water in the rough, rude sea/can wash the balm from an anointed king' and no matter how much Jesus washed over the next days, the perfume of burial would have followed him around. C.K.Barrett comments that 'the Johannine King is glorified in death, and is anointed with the spices of burial' (The Gospel according to St John SPCK 2nd ed, 1978, p.409). As Jesus prepares to make his momentous arrival in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he knows he is coming to be a sacrifice that, as in the stories of Abraham and Isaac, of Moses and the Passover, God will provide a victim to deflect the fate that hangs over the city. And the victim will be himself, a dead man walking.

And Finally...

A man is away from home and decides he'd like to buy some perfume to take back to his wife. The sales assistant shows him some which costs £50 a bottle, so he asks to see what else there is. The next bottle he's offered costs £30.

'Haven't you got anything cheap?' he asks.

The assistant beckons him over and shows him his own face in a mirror.

That's all, folks!

Richard

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