

# End the Week with CME - June 19, 2009

19th Jun 2009

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).

## News

### Book review?

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) [www.spck.org.uk](http://www.spck.org.uk) have a new list of titles out, which includes resources for ministry and parish life, and books to deepen the understanding and prayer life of all Christians.

SPCK are happy to supply books for review, so if you are interested in reviewing a book for End the Week, please email [cme@covcofe.org](mailto:cme@covcofe.org)

## CME Events Coming Up

### September 22, 2009 - Spanish Mystics

A Spirituality Reflection Day with Ruth Tuschling, Tuesday 22 September at Offa House, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £30 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £12.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through [cme@covcofe.org](mailto:cme@covcofe.org).

## Other Events Coming Up

## Ministry Where You Work?

All Readers, OLMs and NSMs in the Coventry Diocese are invited to attend this half-day workshop to explore 'What Sacraments do I discover at work?'

Saturday 11 July 2009, 9am - 12.30pm at Offa House, Offchurch

Followed by an optional lunch (at own cost) for those who would like to stay (£12.50)

The programme will allow time to talk about what you actually do at work, and to explore how this might be Ministry. In particular, we shall explore the sacraments we discover in the course of our work. As well as talking together, we shall work in small groups and allow time for individual reflection. There will also be time for prayer, focussed on the issues of our workplaces.

Please contact Revd Dr Felicity Smith before 30 June if you would like to attend:

[felicity@fandi.me.uk](mailto:felicity@fandi.me.uk) or 01926 492452.

## “Art History, Religion, Feminism: Contemporary Perspectives”

A dialogue with Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California  
Co-author of *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*

7 September 2009, 7 - 9pm at Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, University of Leicester  
Illustrated Lecture, with discussion - *Saving Paradise - An Argument from the History of Art*  
(This is a free event, but registration is requested)

8 September, 9.30am - 3pm at Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, University of Leicester  
Day conference - *Saving Paradise as a feminist project, Feminism in academy and society today*, Panel discussion  
(Cost including lunch: £20 for salaried participants, £10 for unsalaried & students. Cost without lunch: £5 for all participants)

To register for either event, please contact Simon Ball at [sdb26@le.ac.uk](mailto:sdb26@le.ac.uk) or on 0116 242 2603.  
[www.le.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/](http://www.le.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/)

## A Particular Place: Theology for the Future of Parish Ministry

A conference at Westcott House, Cambridge, 16 - 18 September 2009  
With Stanley Hauerwas, Sarah Coakley, Grace Davie & Edmund Newey

Topics will include:

- What is the relationship between the universal and the local?

- How might a theology of place shape our parish ministry?
- How can we be a Church for all when understandings of place are changing?
- What is the relationship between a congregation and its location?
- Are there new ways of thinking about non-geographical ministries in relation to parishes?

For more information, and for details about how to book, see <http://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/resources/conference.html>

### **Global Leadership Summit**

16 - 17 October 2009, leadership training event at Elim Church, Coventry

Elim Church, Coventry will be one of about 15 venues in the UK to hold the Global Leadership Summit for Willow Creek UK.

There is a discounted rate for early booking - please go to <http://www.willowcreek.org.uk/Summit09/index.html> or ring 023 8071 0295 before 30 June for more details.

For more information (not booking) contact [duncanjclark@aol.com](mailto:duncanjclark@aol.com)

### **Bishop's Study Day - Advance Notice**

The Bishop's Study Day for clergy will be held at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry on Monday 2 November 2009. Further details will be sent out in due course.

### **Theological Education and the Theology of Education**

4 - 6 January 2010, St Stephen's house, Oxford.

A conference for all who seek to promote education in theology within the Church of England and beyond. Speakers will include Graham Ward, John Milbank, Alison Milbank, Alister McGrath, Jeremy Morris and Simon Oliver.

Alongside the lectures, the conference will include presentations and discussions of lively and imaginative programmes of education in theology from parishes and dioceses, universities and schools.

For more information, visit [www.returningtothechurch.org.uk](http://www.returningtothechurch.org.uk)

### **Preaching in the Age of the Internet**

Further information will be available in the autumn. Keep an eye on the website at [www.readers.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org)

*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 28 June (Trinity 3) Mark 5.21-end

## Jairus's Journey - have faith even now

Twelve years is a long time. Long enough for parents to watch a child to grow from being a baby to the edge of womanhood; long enough for a woman to feel her life ebb away into despair with chronic illness.

In Mark's story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter, one of the themes is faith and hope in the midst of despair. The story is one of Mark's characteristic 'sandwiches' – the first part of the story focuses on Jairus (Mark 5.21-24), it's interrupted by the woman who touches Jesus (Mark 5.25-34), and then the narrative about Jairus resumes (Mark 5.35-43). Jairus goes on a journey with Jesus and the 'sandwich' gives the sensation of time passing (a practised part of the story-teller's art, the same kind of device is still used in films today). In the process of the journey Jairus sees faith at work in the woman who touches Jesus, which Jesus later implicitly commends as he and Jairus face the death of Jairus's daughter.

Jairus, exceptionally amongst Jewish leaders in the synoptic gospels, comes to Jesus. He is an archisynagogos, who led worship in the synagogue, was responsible for its upkeep and held a place of honour for some years which he might hope to pass on to his son; he was, in short, a 'community chief' (J.T.Burtchaell *From Synagogue to Church* Cambridge UP, 1992, p.244). This man, of prestige, status and dignity, 'falls down at Jesus' feet' (Mark 5.22). Even the leper Jesus encountered only knelt before him; the Gerasene demoniac had bowed (Mark 1.40; 5.6); Jairus lies in the dust at his feet. It's a posture of worship, but it springs from desperation. His daughter, his beloved daughter, is at the doors of death. Lying before Jesus Jairus begs, repeatedly, 'Come, lay hands on her, that she may be healed and live' (Mark 5.23). He is beside himself, out of his mind with anxiety and fear. This dramatic encounter, in itself, would have been enough to be remembered, let alone what happened afterwards.

The woman passes by. Jairus's is an acute anxiety. The woman's is a chronic one. In contrast to the respected and eminent synagogue ruler she is anonymous, not important enough to have her name recorded

for posterity. Yet the signs are that she had once been a rich woman, perhaps socially on a par with Jairus. But her life has been, literally, seeping away from her for twelve years. She was unable to take her sacrifice to the temple (see Lev. 15.25-30). She had lost all her money (Mark says she'd spent it all 'suffering from many doctors', Luke, possibly himself a doctor, famously skips that detail, Mark 5.26; Luke 8.43). For the whole of Jairus's daughter's lifetime she has been under this curse. Most people would have lost hope.

And yet she still has faith. Through her years of affliction she seems not to have lost her belief that God is able to heal her and has not forgotten her. She touches Jesus and knows that the flow of blood has stopped (Mark 5.29), and she at last receives a name: 'Daughter' says Jesus. It's an intimate term of relationship and the rest of the sentence merely fills out the implications. She is restored to life and the community. She can take her place now with Israel in the Temple. Jesus is not ashamed to count her as family. It is her indestructible faith that has made her whole again.

Jesus tells her to go in peace, and the Hebrew shalom lies beneath the phrase: the kingdom which Jesus is bringing is a place where all is restored and put right, where all dwell together at peace with one another and with God. In Hans Küng's evocative phrase, 'God's kingdom is creation healed.'

Yet as Jesus speaks to this daughter, news comes of the other one. She's dead. It's too late. As Jairus's slaves make to lead him away, Jesus stops them and addresses Jairus: 'Don't be afraid. Just believe' (Mark 5.35-36).

English translations can't do justice to the Greek phrase. The key is the tense of 'believe' (pisteue), which is a 'present imperative...here used correctly to denote continued action. Not a single act, but a steady attitude of faith is called for' (C.E.B.Cranfield The Gospel According to St Mark Cambridge UP, 1966, p.187). The same kind of believing that the woman has shown.

The present imperative means 'believe now – even now that hope seems lost, even now that it's all over, even now it's not worth believing any more. Keep on believing even in this situation.' Even though the household laughs at Jesus (Mark 5.40), he keeps on with what he intends to do. The tiny detail of Jesus' exact words, talitha koum in Aramaic underlines that this is a real story. It's not good Aramaic but rather colloquial usage (Mark 5.41, purists insist that Jesus should have said koumi). The child returns to life – and Jesus knows that she will be hungry (Mark 5.43).

In this story we see the first sign in Mark's gospel that even death cannot defeat Jesus. Life has returned to the house of death. Health has returned to a woman of sickness. The kingdom of God is there, in their midst. But when we don't see the signs of the kingdom around us will we still 'keep on believing – even now'?

## **And Finally...**

There once was a rich man who was near death. He had worked hard to make a lot of money and he wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him. An angel heard his plea and appeared to him. "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you" said the angel. But the man asked if God might just bend the rules a bit.

A little while later the angel reappeared and informed the man that God had decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man gathered his largest suitcase and filled it with pure gold bars and placed it beside his bed.

Soon afterward he died. Peter greeted him at the Gates of Heaven but, seeing the suitcase, said "Hang on, you can't bring that in here!" The man explained that he had permission. Peter went off to check and came back saying, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I'm supposed to check its contents before letting it through."

Peter opened the suitcase and exclaimed, "You brought pavement with you?"

**That's all, folks!**

**Richard**

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