

End the Week with the DTP - July 1, 2011

4th Jul 2011

Welcome to End the Week with the DTP! Please note that the published lectionary for July 10 (Trinity 3) give an incorrect Epistle reading: it should be Romans 8.1-11, not Romans 8.1-end!

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.

CME events coming soon

Reminder 2011 Funeral Ministry Course

We are offering the opportunity for Readers and other interested lay people, who have not already done so, to receive training in taking funerals. The Funeral Ministry Course runs in six sessions on 12 September, 19 September, 26 September and 7 November, 14 November, 21 November (Mondays) from 7.30 to 9.30pm at St James' Church Styvechale (Church Hall), Knoll Drive, Coventry CV3 5BT.

Between the two blocks of the course, participants are expected to receive some practical training by shadowing and helping their incumbents in preparatory visiting and the conduct of funeral services.

If you are interested in participating in this course, please let us know as soon as possible. (Please, however, speak to your incumbent in the first instance, as we will be unable to accept you onto the course without their consent and support.) Please then contact cme@covcofe.org for a booking form. Course costs are covered from CME grants to Readers.

Reminder Godly Play Workshop

Wednesday 14 September 2011, 10am-3pm at Offa House

Godly Play is a creative and imaginative approach to Christian nurture. It can be used in a variety of settings such as churches, schools, hospitals, and care homes for the elderly.

This daytime workshop will be run by Revd Peter Privett - Peter is the Godly Play International Regional Training Consultant for the UK, Europe and beyond! You can find out more about Godly Play at www.godlyplay.org.uk/whatisgodlyplay.html.

Cost: £40 (including lunch). Grants for the full cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

Peter will also be running an evening workshop on 14 September, as part of the Offa House Workshops programme - please go to www.offahouseretreat.co.uk/Workshops%202011.pdf for more details.

Other events coming soon

***Reminder* Reader Fellowship Evening**

13 July 2011, 7.30-9.30pm at Offa House

This will be a follow-up meeting from Bishop Robert's address at the Reader conference. If Readers are hoping to go, please contact Chris Haines. Telephone 01788 576279 or email chris@haines.uk.com.

***Reminder* 'Under the hands of God' Retreat Weekend**

Friday 15 - Sunday 17 July 2011, St John's, Nottingham - led by Revd David Runcorn

This is an opportunity for clergy, Readers and anyone who would enjoy a weekend of retreat at St John's. The retreat will be structured around shared times of worship and prayer. There will be biblical reflection with guidance for the silence. There will also be opportunity to meet with one of the experienced team members for prayer and spiritual direction.

The price is £175 per person (or £160 per person for group bookings of 5 or more people). The price includes lunch, evening meal, refreshments and overnight accommodation.

To book contact David Hilton on 0115 968 3224, email bookshop@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk, or download a booking form at <http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/retreat-weekend/>.

Reminder Innovation & Tradition: a conference exploring catholic and sacramental mission

13 - 15 September 2011, Westcott House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5 8BP

This conference is “for all of us seeking renewal of our engagement in God’s mission for the Church. It will help us learn the Kingdom art of bringing out of our treasure ‘what is new and what is old’.” (Martin Seeley, Principal of Westcott House.) Speakers include Damien Feeney, Ian Mobsby and Andrew Davison.

You can download a booking form at www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/about/news/innovation_and_tradition_2011.pdf.

Reminder In Service Study Weeks at St John’s, Nottingham

In Service Study Weeks (ISSWs) offer you the opportunity for in-depth study of a topic of academic interest relevant to the mission and ministry of the church today. They are designed primarily for serving clergy and others in full-time Christian work. Each study week runs from 12noon on Monday to lunchtime on Friday.

ISSWs coming up are:

- The Mission of the Triune God (3-7 October 2011)
- Islam and Christianity in Dialogue (5-9 December 2011)
- The Gospels as a Resource for Practical Theology (9-13 January 2012)
- Understanding Church (6-10 February 2012)
- Engaging Culture (30 April-4 May 2012)

Each ISSW costs £295 (tuition and full-board) or £215 (Tuition only). For full details, go to www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/study-weeks or email academic@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk.

Reminder LOVE IT, FUND IT, KEEP IT! Managing repairs and maintenance for your church building

Wednesday 12 October 2011, 10am - 3.30pm at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham B4 7SX

All Places of Worship face challenges. The biggest usually involve finding money to make repairs, but getting the stewardship and maintenance right can significantly reduce costs in the longer term. The day will show you:

- How to be confident stewards of your building
- How to write a maintenance plan
- How to take the mystery out of funding for repairs to Places of Worship
- How to engage with English Heritage and other funders in creative and positive ways

This event is free of charge. Tea/Coffee on arrival and lunch will be provided.

You can book online by completing this [form](#), or download the flyer and booking form from the [Divine Inspiration website](#).

Reminder Word and Worship

The next Praxis Midlands event will be on 20 October 2011 at Birmingham Cathedral led by Angela Tilby & Richard Cooke

It will be a day to celebrate the Scriptures and explore the way in which Christians have used the Scripture liturgically through history, and in the modern church.

For full details, including how to book, please go to http://www.praxismidlands.org.uk/next_event.html.

NEW Local Ministry Network National Conference - Living out Collaborative Ministry

20-22 January 2012 at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesden, Hertfordshire

The Conference will focus on putting Collaborative Ministry into practice. Clergy and lay people involved in Group / Team Ministries are particularly invited to attend.

The cost will be £160. Programme details and booking forms can be found at www.localministry.net.

You can find details of all the events coming up, which have been advertised in recent editions of End the Week, [here](#).

Notes on the Reading for Sunday 10 July

'No Condemnation' • Romans 8. 1-11 • 3rd Sunday after Trinity

Like the crashing climax of a great symphony, Paul announces that 'Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Rom 8.1). Heading towards the end of the first major section of Romans, the outline of his gospel, this is what he has been waiting to proclaim. The original Greek is even more emphatic: literally, 'No, therefore, now condemnation...'

But Paul hasn't been talking about judgement in the preceding passage, has he? We left him last week struggling with the human condition, trapped between what he wanted to do, and what he actually did. His final statement was 'So while my mind is slave to the Law of God, my flesh is slave to the law of sin' (Rom. 7.25). He's the slave of two masters – which cannot be. One of them must win.

We know of one situation where a slave was subject to two masters from Paul's own experience. His letter to Philemon is about Onesimus, a runaway slave who seems to have voluntarily taken up a role as Paul's own servant (Paul puns that Onesimus – literally the 'useful one' – is useless to Philemon but has become useful to him, Philemon 11). The gist of the letter is that Paul is returning Onesimus to his rightful master, but the tone of the letter encourages Philemon not to stand on his rights but to graciously give Onesimus to Paul. In other words, Philemon, the old master, who might demand Onesimus's return is encouraged not to do so, leaving Onesimus to belong to a new master, Paul. In this situation Paul might give Onesimus his freedom (as he also seems to urge Philemon to do, Philemon 16).

The letter is very short, and as fascinating in what it doesn't say as much as what it does. Paul doesn't make demands of Philemon, but implicit in the letter is that he has the right, if he so wishes, to pull rank on him. He's older than Philemon, brought him to faith, and can command the use of a guest room in his house (Philemon 9, 19, 22). There's also the unstated possibility that Onesimus's motive in running away to Paul is because he had been mistreated by Philemon; this was the most common reason why a slave might escape and ask protection from someone of a higher status than their own master, who would intercede on their behalf.

If Philemon insisted on his rights as master of Onesimus, Onesimus would be condemned to return to him. Yet Paul and Philemon are not of equal status. By enlisting Paul on his side, Onesimus has opened the prospect of release for himself, not only from slavery to a master in whose service he does not want to remain, but perhaps also into genuine freedom. This is only possible because Paul has a higher status than Philemon or, to put it more bluntly, is the more powerful of the two.

And this is exactly the situation Paul describes in Romans 8.1-11. The human being (perhaps, given Rom. 7.15-25, Paul himself) is a servant like Onesimus with two masters. Must he be condemned to return to the old master, sin? No. Why not? Because his new master is more powerful. Here is the solution to the apparent conundrum which Paul states in Rom. 7.24-25. He is a miserable wretch, seeking rescue. Jesus is the saviour, but while Paul yearns to serve Christ, he remains enslaved to sin through his flesh. Yet Jesus has the power to rescue him because Christ and sin do not have equal status. The judgement does not go

against those who are 'in Christ Jesus', but for them. God can do what it is impossible for the Law to accomplish (Rom. 8.3).

The key to Paul's argument comes towards the end of the passage. Life always trumps death, so the Spirit of life will always have a higher status than the Law that leads to death. How do we know that the Spirit is the Spirit of life? Because the Spirit is the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8.11). In other words, Paul's argument is predicated on the resurrection of Jesus. This is the answer to, the release from and the rescue route out of, the human sin which Paul has established as universal in the previous chapters. How is the power of that resurrection which delivers from condemnation known? Through the Spirit who dwells within them (Rom. 8.9).

Paul's struggles with the flesh in Romans 7 strike a chord with most who read them. We know what he's talking about. But in this next section of his argument he outlines why, despite the irritating persistence of habits of previous slavery, Christians ought not to give up, because God is working in them by his Spirit to heal and sanctify. There is no condemnation. Peter Oakes, in his absolutely fascinating recent book *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (SPCK 2009), draws attention to the fact that 'Endurance is a surprisingly persistent minor motif in Romans' (it is mentioned in Rom. 2.7; 5.3-4; 8.25; 12.12; 15.4-5), and concludes that 'The letter certainly includes enough about endurance and hope for someone...whose life is a struggle, to hear Romans as an encouragement to endurance and, conversely, an acknowledgement of the fact that many faced a life of struggle' (pp.138-39). Paul will elaborate the perspective that he has revealed in this early part of Romans 8 in the following passages, setting it especially within an eschatological context. For now it is perhaps enough to meditate on his headline, 'No, therefore, now condemnation...' I'm reminded of G. K. Chesterton's comment that 'Christianity has not been tried, found wanting, and rejected. It has been tried, found difficult, and given up.' The struggles realistically depicted in Romans 7 are placed in a new context by Romans 8, and Paul's unshakeable conviction that the God who can raise Jesus from the dead can lift even him out of sin and into new life.

And Finally...

A joke on a theme which I think St Paul might enjoy....

A man dies and goes to heaven. St. Peter meets him at the pearly gates.

St. Peter says, "Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in."

"Okay" the man says, "I attended church every Sunday"

"That's good, says St. Peter, " that's worth two points"

"Two points?" he says. "Well, I gave 10% of all my earnings to the church"

"Well, let's see," answers Peter, "that's worth another 2 points. Did you do anything else?"

"Two points? Golly. How about this: I started a soup kitchen in my town and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans."

"Fantastic, that's certainly worth a point," he says.

"hmmm..." the man says, "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart."

"That's wonderful," says St. Peter, "that's worth three points!"

"THREE POINTS!!" the man cries, "At this rate the only way I get into heaven is by the grace of God!"

"Come on in!"

That's all, folks!

Richard

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