

# End the Week with CME - July 3, 2009 3rd Jul 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).

## 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).

### September 23, 2009 - Models of Parochial Ministry

A Study Day hosted by the Rugby Team Ministry and facilitated by Dr Helen Cameron (The Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology). Wednesday 23 September, 10am - 4pm at St George's Church, St John's Avenue, Rugby.

The aims of the day are:

- To hear the experiences of others involved in the creative re-shaping of parochial ministry.
- To engage with an external theological reflector and with guests who are also interested in the alternatives to lumping more and more parishes together in the search for viability.
- To disseminate the developments more widely.

*We want to hear the experiences of parishes who are remodelling the shape of their ministry, to take better account of the gifts of the laity and the opportunities for mission that are provided by developing that ministry. We also want to hear the ways in which stipendiary clergy input has been used to support this development.*

This is for you if you are:

- Being creative about the shape of parochial ministry, now and in the future.
- A decision-maker at diocesan level, somebody who can bring about change.

The cost for the day is £30 (including lunch). Grants for half the cost are available for clergy and Readers.

For further information, contact Revd Mark Beach (Team Rector of Rugby) at [rector@rugbyteam.org.uk](mailto:rector@rugbyteam.org.uk) or on 01788 565609. And to book a place, please contact Sarah Palmer (Coventry CME) at [cme@covcofe.org](mailto:cme@covcofe.org) or on 02476 521316.

## 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.

*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 12 July (Trinity 5) Mark 6. 14-29

### Who's Indispensable?

Plunging your fist into a bucket of water, pulling it out and seeing how the water immediately fills up the space is sometimes recommended as an exercise for anyone who thinks they are indispensable. The bible is full of

stories of people who looked indispensable but ultimately were not.

Moses is perhaps the prime example. How could the people of Israel cross over into the promised land without him? Surely it was unthinkable. Yet that is what they did, learning early on in their life as a nation that no one individual could ever be bigger than the story itself. God himself is the only indispensable one.

John the Baptist had made a huge impact in his time. If we only had the Jewish historian to go by, we would reckon that John was more significant, and certainly a greater phenomenon than, Jesus himself. Jesus probably began his ministry as a disciple of John (this is certainly the picture which emerges from John's gospel, see John 1.19-42; 3.22-24). John's imprisonment by Herod Antipas seems to have been the trigger for a new direction by Jesus, announcing the coming kingdom in Galilee (Mark 1.14-15). John was, at the very least, the warm-up man for Jesus. Was it conceivable that the kingdom might come and John the Baptist not be there to greet it? He had predicted the coming of a 'strong one' (Mark 1.7), whom he may or may not have identified as Jesus. Perhaps Jesus expected that, when the final confrontation in Jerusalem came, John would be part of it.

Eventually Herod had John killed (Mark 6.17-29), even though Mark records his sorrow at being placed in a position where he had to do so (Mark 6.26). But the memory seems to have haunted Herod: he fears that John has been raised (Mark 6.16). The passage hints that Jesus was continuing what John had begun. Like the heroes of old, John was not indispensable in the purpose of God.

Instead the passage functions as one of Mark's famous 'sandwiches': it gives the sense of time passing while the twelve disciples spread good news round the whole country (Mark 6.7-13; 30). It also reminds us of the question of the identity of Jesus, raised powerfully in the earlier story of the stilling of the storm (Mark 4.41), indeed the questions of 8.27-28 are anticipated in 6.14-15. In contrast with Jesus, John's body is placed in a tomb – and remains there (Mark 6.29), despite Herod's fears.

Yet John's death does not deflect the purpose of God, of the coming of the kingdom. Despite the squalid doings of the court, wonderful events are happening in Galilee. What would have seemed a dire setback only a few months before, in John's death, can now be seen as a sad event but not ultimately a decisive one.

John, like Moses, was not indispensable. Even as the powers of evil try to frustrate the kingdom (and they are never far below the surface in Mark's gospel), God's purpose continues. With John's death even more weight falls on Jesus. And the audience begins to see that Jesus is much more than John was. If Jesus is more than a prophet, how can we describe him? Who is he really? But there is one great miracle to come which will suggest some answers to this question, in the feeding of the five thousand.

## **And Finally... a joke**

Q: Why did John the Baptist take his shoes off before going into the water?

A: He wanted to save soles!

**That's all, folks!**

**Richard**

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