

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's
Warrington*



Celebrating Sunday at Home

3rd Sunday of Easter (A)
26 April 2020

Preparation

It can be helpful to prepare a little space as a focus for your prayer. Perhaps light a candle or tea light and place it next to a crucifix or icon. You might like to include some flowers as well.

Easter Song

Why not choose an Easter Hymn or Song from YouTube or a CD to begin your time of prayer.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

R. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Gloria

Let us sing the praises of the Lord:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

For you alone are the Holy One,

**you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Gospel Acclamation

'Alleluia' is our Easter song. Perhaps sing the Alleluia together using a version you all know.

Gospel

(Luke 24: 13-35)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

N = Narrator, J = Jesus, D = Disciple

- N: Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them:
- J: What matters are you discussing as you walk along?
- N: They stopped short, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas answered him:
- D: You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.
- J: What things?
- D: All about Jesus of Nazareth who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.
- N: Then Jesus said to them:
- J: You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?
- N: Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, Jesus made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them.

D: It is nearly evening and the day is almost over.

N: So he went in to stay with them.

Now while he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other:

D: Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?

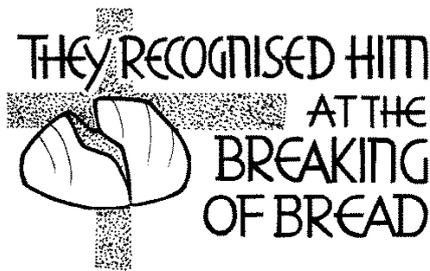
N: They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them:

D: Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.

N: Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Reflection by Fr Chris Thomas

When I worked as Youth Chaplain in St Helens, I used to take groups of young people away to a place called Kintbury in Berkshire. It was a wonderful place where young people were enabled to share their stories with one another and through acceptance and understanding come to a new and deeper awareness of their own dignity as human beings and of the love of God for them. I watched and listened as through an experience of deep listening and sharing, the young people became aware of the presence of God with them however difficult things might have been. Stories of broken homes that they felt responsible for, of neglect, of abuse, of all sorts of things that made life not worth living, gave way to new hope through love and acceptance. It was a powerful and very real experience.

The two disciples in the Gospel story felt as though life wasn't worth living any more. To be on the road away from Jerusalem is to be going the wrong way. They had watched the one they thought to be the Messiah be broken and die on the cross. All they could see was their misery and their crushed dreams. I often think that the saddest words in the Bible come from Cleopas - 'we had hoped.' We can all be like those two disciples, so self-absorbed that we are unable to see that the risen Lord is there, at our side, particularly at this time when many people are alone and struggling

with what the future might be. But then something happens to the two disciples as they begin to share their deep experience with one another. They become aware of an intimate and abiding presence that is with them. Somehow in their relationship with one another, in their deep sharing, they find his risen presence.

The early Church met the risen Jesus in the communities that gathered. Whenever they met together, there was an awareness that he was there. That was their experience. Luke wants us to know that when we meet together and take the risk to be real with one another he is present. When we are prepared to drop our masks and share our real selves with all our brokenness and vulnerability, we will find the risen Christ. We have to be real with one another to discover the presence of Jesus because his presence is a real presence and won't be experienced in a state of illusion. The sad fact is that many of us live at a level of unreality, never really letting others know what is in our hearts and we con ourselves that is what life is about.

For the Church to communicate the presence of Jesus to the world we have to be communities where that deep level of sharing and listening goes on, particularly at this time. That will only happen when people like you and I understand brokenness and pain and hold it lovingly. It will only happen when people are not judged and criticised for what they are but accepted and loved for who they are. It will only happen when we are open and welcoming and don't reject those who seem different because of their race, sexuality, gender or social status.

As they got near to the village the stranger looked as if he was going on, but the disciples asked him to stay for the night. Jesus went in with them, he took bread, and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. It may be some time before we can celebrate Eucharist together again, but we can enter into the reality of one another and discover the presence of God walking with us. When that happens and we can once again gather in our churches, then our celebrations of the Eucharist will become far more real. As we find him in one another so we will find him in the breaking of the bread.

Bidding Prayers

There are some Bidding Prayers on the Parish Website for today, or you may like to make your own prayers as an individual or group.

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

Acknowledgements

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