

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



Celebrating Sunday at Home

6th Sunday of Easter (A)
17 May 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:

**Glorify 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.**

First Reading

(1 Peter 3: 15-18)

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

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

Gospel

(John 14: 15-21)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate

to be with you for ever,

that Spirit of truth

whom the world can never receive

since it neither sees nor knows him;

but you know him,

because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans;

I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me;

but you will see me,

because I live and you will live.

On that day you will understand that I am in my Father

and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments

and keeps them

will be one who loves me;

and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,

and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection by Fr Chris Thomas

My Dad was the youngest of four brothers, the eldest of whom was born in the nineteenth century and died in the First World War. All my cousins on my Dad's side are much older than me and as a child I always felt very insignificant and very frightened when I had to go to either of his two remaining brother's houses. I do not know whether you can imagine what it was like to be four or five and to be surrounded by adults, none of whom were particularly good with children. I used to spend most of my time in silence crouched on the

floor ready to run for cover behind the sofa whenever I was noticed. It was agony. To help me get through it, I invented a friend called Billy who only ever came out when I went to my uncle's houses. He was the brave one who would speak for me when I couldn't or would play with me when I felt alone. The reality was that Billy was simply part of me but a part of me that enabled me to cope in a lonely frightening situation. I guess most of us have strategies to deal with the times when we feel most alone, strategies to deal with our fear. In today's Gospel we find Jesus telling his disciples that their greatest strategy is to trust in his presence.

The Advocate he tells them will come to be with them. In Greek the word we translate as Advocate is Paraclete. Paraclete was one who stood by the little person who was unable to speak for themselves, the one who was powerless and voiceless. The Paraclete fought their case in a court of law. The disciples were going to be those little ones and the Spirit of Jesus would be the Paraclete, to be with them and to help them as they face the world.



What's Jesus saying to us? It is really very simple. We are never alone because he is with us. Whenever we have to face difficult times, whenever we feel alone or afraid, believe the truth that his Spirit is within us. We are incredibly special people. God loves us enough to enter into real intimacy with us. That is why Jesus reminds us that he becomes part of us, and we part of him. It is the coming together of the human and the divine. It is what our Baptism and Confirmation tells us is true, that God is within us. We do not have to look outside ourselves for strength, the Spirit is present and if, in our times of crisis, we can only spend a moment drawing on the strength that comes from the Spirit, I think we would be amazed at how real that Spirit is. I guess that is why I find some religious practices difficult to handle because they can point us away from the mystery of the God who has chosen to live within our hearts. God has given us all we need to journey through life and lives within us.

I don't know about you but whenever I am faced with difficult times, I look to God to change the things that I find difficult. I suppose it is a natural response. I think the reality is that the Spirit within will change us and strengthen us, so that we can cope with difficult situations. The situation may never change but we do and the strength is somehow given. In just a couple of weeks we will celebrate Pentecost. Maybe we could pray that we would become aware of the presence of the Advocate within us, so that when we come to celebrate that feast, it won't be empty ritual but a real celebration of the gift of the God, who promises to be with us always.

A Poem by Helen Jones
(Pastoral Associate in Liverpool South)

**Christ in every laboured breath
Christ in hands that heal
Christ in the tears we shed
Christ in words of comfort said**

**Christ in our helplessness
Christ in the heart of the volunteer
Christ in our loneliness
Christ in the ears of those who hear**

**Christ in our isolation
Christ in bonds of family
Christ in our fears left unsaid
Christ in prayers offered humbly**

**Christ in the hope we know
Christ was, and is, and ever will be so.
Christ is risen
Christ is risen indeed!**

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

Concluding Prayer

God our Father,
each person is precious to you.
You are the Giver of life.

Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Blessing

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

R. Amen.



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