

# PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



## Celebrating the Ascension at Home

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (A)  
21 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!**

### Collect

Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,  
and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving,  
for the Ascension of Christ your Son  
is our exaltation,  
and, where the Head has gone before in glory,  
the Body is called to follow in hope.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**R. Amen.**

### First Reading

*(Acts 1: 1-11)*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In my earlier work, *Theophilus*, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had

continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

The word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 46

- 1 **All peoples, clap your hands,  
cry to God with shouts of joy!  
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,  
great king over all the earth.**
- 2 **God goes up with shouts of joy;  
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.  
Sing praise for God, sing praise,  
sing praise to our king, sing praise.**
- 3 **God is king of all the earth,  
sing praise with all your skill.  
God is king over the nations;  
God reigns on his holy throne.**

### Gospel Acclamation

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

### Gospel

*(Matthew 28: 16-20)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
**R. Glory to you, O Lord.**

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### Reflection from 'The Word Among Us'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' (cf. 1st Reading).

Amazing. After three years of travelling with Jesus, after seeing him arrested, tried, and crucified, after seeing him risen from the dead, even after forty days of Holy Spirit-inspired instruction — after all this, the apostles are still confused. They ask Jesus if he is now going to kick out the Romans and restore Israel to its former glory. They just didn't get it yet.

Still, we can ask a similar question today: "Lord, when are you going to come and set everything right again? What about all the wars and poverty and abortions?" In response, Jesus tells the apostles, and us: Yes, I came to establish the kingdom of God — but I want you to help build it.

It's only right, on today of all days, to praise Jesus with "trumpet blast" (cf. Psalm). But in the midst of our celebrating, Jesus' words still reverberate: "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). "Go...make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus may have ascended, but the work of his kingdom continues — and he has placed that work in our hands. That's why he promised us the Holy Spirit. We need the Spirit so that our attempts to preach the gospel, take a stand against sin, and lift up the poor are filled with God's own grace and love.

It's not as hard as you might think. Preaching the gospel can be as simple as offering to pray for a struggling friend or sharing with a neighbour about how God helped you during a tough situation. Lifting up the poor can mean a weekly visit to a nursing home or increasing your donations to the poor box. Taking a stand against sin can mean praying for people's conversion or trying to establish a more peaceful environment in the home.

Yes, Jesus is going to restore his kingdom. And he's going to use you to do it.

"Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts. Empower us to build a kingdom worthy of the risen Lord!"

### Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God  
the Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen.**

### Bidding Prayers

That we may take to heart the last words of the Lord Jesus and go into the world to proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation.

Risen Saviour!

**R. Hear our prayer.**

That those who witness to Jesus in places where the Church is persecuted may be kept safe from harm.

Risen Saviour!

**R. Hear our prayer.**

For all who are sick at home or in hospital. May the Lord put his healing hand upon them, and support those who care for them.

Risen Saviour!

**R. Hear our prayer.**

For those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially Joseph Gannon, Baby John Joseph Ortega, Bishop Vincent Malone, Jo Busby, Peter Lomax and Baby Joseph Gormley-Hudson.

Risen Saviour!

**R. Hear our prayer.**

For our own personal intentions, for those we are thinking about in this Mass, and for all the people of our parish of Blessed James Bell.

*(Pause for silent prayer)*

Risen Saviour!

**R. Hear our prayer.**

### The Lord's Prayer

#### Blessing

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

**R. Amen.**



### Acknowledgements

Excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010 International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Scripture Readings from *The Jerusalem Bible* © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd. Psalm from *The Psalms: A New Translation* © 1963 The Grail (England) administered by HarperCollins.