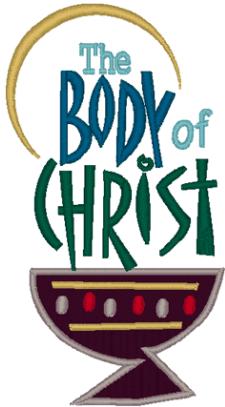


PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



Celebrating Sunday at Home

The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ (A)
"Corpus Christi" – 14 June 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 the Scriptures and some flowers as well.

Song

Perhaps choose a song or piece of music from YouTube or a CD to begin your time of prayer. Some suggestions for today's feast:

Adoro te devote
Alleluia sing to Jesus
Ave Verum Corpus
I am the bread of life
Jesus my Lord my God my all
O bread of heaven
O Sacrament Most Holy
One bread, one body
Soul of my Saviour
This is my body

Sign of the Cross

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

R. Amen.

Greeting

Let us praise the Lord Jesus Christ,
who is present among us and in his Word,
and who keeps us united in love.

R. Bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Penitential Act

Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. For we have sinned against you.

Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

R. And grant us your salvation.

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Sing the 'Alleluia' together using a version you all know well.

Gospel

(John 6: 51-58)

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

Jesus said to the crowd:
'I am the living bread
which has come down from heaven.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give is my flesh,
for the life of the world.'



Then the Jews started arguing with one another: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said. Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man
and drink his blood,
you will not have life in you.
Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood
has eternal life,
and I shall raise him up on the last day.
For my flesh is real food
and my blood is real drink.
He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood
lives in me
and I live in him.
As I, who am sent by the living Father,
myself draw life from the Father,
so whoever eats me will draw life from me.
This is the bread come down from heaven;
not like the bread our ancestors ate:
they are dead,
but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection by Fr Chris Thomas

When I was the University Chaplain in Liverpool we ran a drop-in centre for students. Because our building was right next to the Cathedral we used to get a lot of the street people wandering in looking for warmth and shelter. Student life can be very insular and petty, so the street people added a much-needed breadth to life and inspired several of the students to work in night shelters round the city.

One of the men who came regularly into the building was Tony. Tony was an alcoholic, a big genial Irish man with a sad tale to tell of rejection and abuse which had led him on to the streets. One day he walked shakily into the building at about 5pm and went into the toilet.

After about ten minutes I followed him in to find him slumped in the corner. He was semi-conscious and obviously extremely ill. I called my assistant in and went for a blanket and a pillow and then called for an ambulance who diverted us to the police. When I went back to the toilet Nicky, my assistant, and I made Tony as comfortable as we could and sat with him. The police arrived and tried to bully Tony into standing up. He couldn't do it and in the end was crying so I asked the police to leave. They went into the lounge and waited. I sat down next to Tony. Nicky and I held his hands. He looked at us both and smiled and then died. I went out and told the police who had the grace to look embarrassed and then we sat with Tony until arrangements were made and his body removed. After Tony had died, Nicky sat with the tears pouring down her face, and when Tony had been taken away and we were alone again she looked at me and said 'I've just seen Jesus.' It was for me a Gospel moment, a moment when I glimpsed the truth of the presence of God with us. It was like a flash of light. Here in this broken, battered body of a vulnerable, sad man was the presence of Christ.



'Homeless Jesus' bronze statue by Timothy Schmalz

One of the major themes in John's Gospel is that of blindness and sight. All the time we're invited to look beyond what we see with our physical eyes and recognise the presence of God who has chosen to be intimately involved with creation, so much so that every aspect of this world is charged with the grandeur of God. There is no division between the sacred and the secular. God is in it all and everything is made holy by the presence of God. Look at everything and everybody with fresh eyes and see the presence of the living Lord.

It's that intimacy that is communicated to us in bread and wine, but not just in bread and wine. Jesus tries to show the people that only by feeding on him will they really experience new life and enter into true intimacy. Only by feeding on him and opening our hearts to him will we be able to recognise the truth of the presence of God everywhere. I am the bread of life. Eat my body, drink my blood. This was a scandal to those who couldn't see beyond. He was inviting them to enter

into life. They saw him as preaching something that was forbidden to them from the book of the Leviticus and agreeing to cannibalism and so they said that it was intolerable language. At the end of the chapter on the bread of life, we find it is decision time. People can either go all the way with Peter, the symbol here of the Church, who knows where life is to be found, or walk away into the darkness of unbelief.

I suppose the question for us to ask ourselves, on this feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, is whether or not we're prepared to feed on Jesus, enter into intimacy with him, and look at the world with new eyes, seeing the presence of God in all things or whether we'll refuse to see and recognise and know the truth that God is with us in the very stuff of our lives.

Silent Reflection

Poem

Street Corner Christ

I saw Christ today
At a street corner stand,
In the rags of a beggar he stood
He held ballads in his hand.

He was crying out: "Two for a penny
Will anyone buy
The finest ballads ever made
From the stuff of joy?"

But the blind and deaf went past
 Knowing only there
An uncouth ballad seller
 With tail-matted hair.

By Patrick Kavanagh

Bidding Prayers

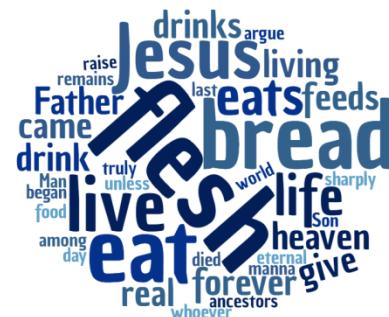
There are some Bidding Prayers on the Parish Website for today, or you may like to make your own prayers as an individual or group.

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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