

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



Celebrating Sunday at Home

Trinity Sunday (A)
7 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.

Sign of the Cross

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

R. Amen.

Gathering Prayer

O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
as we read your Word
reveal yourself to us:
a God of tenderness and compassion,
slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.
Bathed in your merciful love,
may we become more like you
and share your love in all we do and say.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

First Reading *(Exodus 34: 4-6, 8-9)*

A reading from the book of Exodus

With the two tablets of stone in his hands, Moses went up the mountain of Sinai in the early morning as the Lord had commanded him. And the Lord descended in the form of a cloud, and Moses stood with him there. He called on the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.' And Moses bowed down to the ground at once and worshipped. 'If I have indeed won your favour, Lord,' he said 'let my Lord come with

us, I beg. True, they are a headstrong people, but forgive us our faults and our sins, and adopt us as your heritage.'

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Canticle of Daniel

(Daniel 3: 52-56)

- 1 You are blest, Lord God of our fathers.
To you glory and praise for evermore.
Blest your glorious holy name.
To you glory and praise for evermore.
- 2 You are blest in the temple of your glory.
To you glory and praise for evermore.
You are blest on the throne of your kingdom.
To you glory and praise for evermore.
- 3 You are blest who gaze into the depths.
To you glory and praise for evermore.
You are blest in the firmament of heaven.
To you glory and praise for evermore.

Second Reading

(2 Corinthians 13: 11-13)

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with the holy kiss. All the saints send you greetings. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

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

Gospel

(John 3: 16-18)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection by Fr Chris Thomas

Many years ago, I watched an interview with Colin Parry who was the father of Tim, the young boy killed in the Warrington IRA bomb attack. It was a very poignant interview as Colin shared deep emotions about his loss and his thoughts on the Northern Ireland situation and those who had planted the bomb

that had murdered his son. As I watched I knew that this man was never going to be destroyed by what had happened to him and his family.

More than his incredible bravery in the midst of terrible tragedy, Colin Parry helped me to crystallise something of my image of God, in so far as you can ever capture in words something which is beyond words and in a sense can only be experienced. As Colin Parry spoke and shared, there was within him a strength, a vulnerability and a power, which for me capture something of the reality of God and the life of God that we are inviting people into. For God to so love the world, as John says in today's Gospel, is all of those things, strength, vulnerability, and power. God chose to love, and from this place of strength has chosen to be vulnerable in the person of Jesus, who gave his life away so that we might see and understand how loving our God is. When strength and vulnerability come together there is an explosion of power. That is the Holy Spirit, who transforms and sets free. During this COVID-19 pandemic, we have had, if we have eyes to see, many images of God and all of them have been about strength, vulnerability and power.

I have been told that there is a picture painted on the wall of a thirteenth century Lutheran Church in Germany. It shows an old man holding in his hands the orb of power - God the Creator. On the opposite wall is the broken bleeding body of Jesus staring at the Father with a look of such intensity and understanding and love it almost breaks you. It is an image of the vulnerable God who has given Godself away for the sake of love. On the ceiling with rays of power coming from its wings is the Spirit. The relationship of pure love between the Father and the Son is the Spirit, the power, which enables strength and vulnerability to be shared. I once saw a picture of it and it moved me to tears.

What does all of that say to us today in 2020? If you go back to the book of Genesis, the author reminds us that we are made in the image and likeness of God. Within us there is the incredible strength of love by which we can choose to be vulnerable and give ourselves away for the sake of the world and as that strength and vulnerability come together there is power. Those who challenge the world are those whose love is strong enough to let them give themselves away for the sake of the world, Martin Luther, Ghandi, Mother Teresa and many others.

The challenge of the feast we celebrate today is to find within ourselves the strength that comes from love and is God. It is to share with the world love which does not count the cost and is expressed through compassion and mercy and forgiveness. It is to show love, which has conquered the petty self-righteousness that so many of us live by. It is to be led into that place of vulnerability in which for the sake of others we give our very lives away. It is in the doing and the living of those realities that we find power. It is a hard way to live. Love is never easy, and vulnerability frightens us, but the power of the Spirit is with us. So, on this Trinity Sunday, let's pray that the God who has revealed Godself as strength, vulnerability and power will break

forth within us and through us will bring life to the world.

Silent Reflection

Song of Praise

- 1 **Father, we adore you,
lay our lives before you.
How we love you.**
- 2 **Jesus, we adore you...
lay our lives before you.
How we love you.**
- 3 **Spirit, we adore you...
lay our lives before you.
How we love you.**

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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

Trinity Blessing

May God,
who comes to us
in the things of this world,
bless your eyes
and be in your seeing.

May Christ,
who looks upon you
with deepest love,
bless your eyes
and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit,
who perceives what is
and what may yet be,
bless your eyes
and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three
bless your eyes
and cause you to see.

In this new season
may you know
the presence of the God
who dwells within your days,
the mystery of the Christ
who drenches you in love,
the blessing of the Spirit
who bears you into life anew.

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