

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

30th August 2020

Entrance Procession

Music: Will you come and follow me – John Bell

Collect

O God,
whose word burns like a fire within us,
grant us a bold and faithful spirit,
that in your strength we may be unafraid
to speak your word
and follow you where you lead.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

(Jeremiah 20: 7-9)

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

You have seduced me, Lord,
and I have let myself be seduced;
you have overpowered me: you were the stronger.
I am a daily laughing-stock,
everybody's butt.
Each time I speak the word, I have to howl
and proclaim: 'Violence and ruin!'
The word of the Lord has meant for me
insult, derision, all day long.
I used to say, 'I will not think about him,
I will not speak in his name any more.'
Then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart,
imprisoned in my bones.
The effort to restrain it wearied me,
I could not bear it.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Psalms 63

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

1 O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched,
lifeless and without water.

2 You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Gospel Acclamation (Lourdes)

Gospel

(Matthew 16: 21-27)

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

Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. 'Heaven preserve you, Lord;' he said 'this must not happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because the way you think is not God's way but man's.'

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Bidding Prayers

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

Music: Ave verum corpus – Elgar

Prayer over the Offerings

Lord,
may this holy offering bring us your blessing
and accomplish within us its promise of salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Eucharistic Acclamations

Sanctus En Fa Majeur – Lourdes

The Mystery of Faith

**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

Communion Rite

Music: Unless a grain of wheat – Bernadette Farrell

Prayer after Communion

Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table,
we beseech you, Lord,
that, being the food of charity,
it may confirm our hearts

and stir us to serve you in our neighbour.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Concluding Rite

Distribution of Communion

Music: Taste and see – James Moore

Acknowledgements

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Reflection by Fr Chris Thomas

Director of the Irenaeus Project

One of the freest people I have ever met is Edwina Gately. For those of you who have never encountered her, she's a poet, theologian, artist, writer, and lay minister. She has been described as a modern-day mystic and prophet. Edwina came to Southport to speak at one of our conferences several years ago. She was a great communicator but, as she shared her stories about her life's experience, I realised that I was in the presence of someone very special. She oozed the essence of humanity with her compassion and her understanding. Full of humour and sensitivity, she had no time for the trammels of life and simply responded to where she felt God was leading her; and God has definitely led her.

From Lancaster, she found herself teaching in Africa and then started the Volunteer Missionary Movement. She then spent time reflecting and praying in the Sahara desert. She then went to the USA where she worked with street people and women in prostitution. She has a very simple and profound message that God is with us and particularly to be found in those who are in need. As I spent time with her, I found myself both fascinated and challenged by her freedom. I think too, that I became aware that her freedom to listen to God and to respond to God had cost her a great deal. She has suffered in her following of the promptings of the Spirit. She has been misunderstood and, at times, scapegoated by others who do not quite understand. Still she ploughs on, relentless in her desire to respond to the Gospel.

Listening to Edwina reminded me that the gospel cannot be forced into the parameters that we want it to fit into and sometimes we have to take risks to proclaim the Good News and often what we do won't be seen as acceptable or even orthodox, but whose approval are we looking for?

In last week's Gospel Matthew told us of Peter's confession of faith. Today we find Jesus begins to spell out what it means to be a disciple and it's a hard message to take. The son of man was destined to suffer. If you're going to say that Jesus is the Christ and walk in his way, then you'll discover that real life only comes through suffering. Peter can't accept that's

God's way and so Jesus says to him, 'Get behind me Satan'. In other words it's a con to believe anything else. Life comes through death. What's Jesus saying to us? I think he's saying don't run away from the pain of the world. Enter into it. To walk the Jesus way means we have to take on the pain of others and not simply salve our consciences by putting a few pence in a collection or taking the moral high ground on particular issues.

We're to face the pain and take it on and somehow in the doing of that transform it into life. We're to do the same with our own pain. Don't run away from it, discover what it means. The hardest times in my life have also been the most life-giving times as I've tried to discover what my pain was telling me. Don't try and protect yourself from hurt. Don't put up the barriers against love which always hurts at some point, and yet most of us do.

The truth is that if we try to protect ourselves, if we try to keep in control, then we will lose our lives because that keeping in control is not life. What drives us out of fear and grows out of insecurity and keeps us independent and untouchable is shielding us from life. The only way to enter into life is to enter it through death. You've got to let yourself be vulnerable. You've got to let yourself be weak. You've got to let yourself be touched and broken. Otherwise those words will simply remain poetry or philosophy.

That's the example of Jesus. Not just when he was hanging on the cross but every moment of his life. It cost Jesus to heal the sick. It cost him emotionally and physically. It cost Jesus not to give in to his own needs and desires. It cost him to deal with his own pain and hurt but he did it so we would know the truth that from each death comes life. If we gather here today and say as Peter said, 'You are the Christ', let's do it knowing that it means we walk the real journey of life. That it's costly but it is life giving.

Adapted from a Prayer of Consecration by Ruth Burgess

Take my feet
from the safety of the shallows
out into the challenge of unexplored depths.
Take my heart
from the sterility of selfish preoccupations
to the fruitfulness of wounded love.
Take my mind
from the narrowness of human thought
to the expansiveness of divine insight.
Take my hands
from the poverty of having and keeping
to the riches of giving and sharing.
Take my voice
from the blandness of safe religion
to the proclamation of your radical Kingdom
Take my life
from safety to risk, from coldness to love,
from darkness to light, from selfishness to sharing,
from silence to proclamation.
Take my life for your Kingdom!