

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Peace Sunday – 17 January 2021

Entrance Procession

Music: Dear Lord and Father of mankind – J Whittier

Greeting & Penitential Act

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
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 *(1 Samuel 3: 3-10, 19)*

A reading from the first book of Samuel

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.' Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Psalm 40

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

- 1 I have waited, waited for the Lord,
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.
- 2 Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
then said I, "Behold I come."

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

(John 1: 35-42)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,' – which means Teacher – 'where do you live?' 'Come and see' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' – meaning Rock.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Bidding Prayers

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

Music: The Call – Ralph Vaughan Williams

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that we may participate worthily in these mysteries,
for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice
is celebrated
the work of our redemption is accomplished.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Eucharistic Acclamations

Holy, Holy – People's Mass (Vermulst)

The Mystery of Faith

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

Communion Rite

Music: The Lamb – John Tavener

Prayer after Communion

Pour on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love,
and in your kindness
make those you have nourished
by this one heavenly Bread
one in mind and heart.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Concluding Rite

Blessing & Dismissal

Acknowledgements

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Reflection on the Gospel

'What do you want?' 'Where do you live?' 'Come and see!' So begins the relationship of Andrew and the other disciple with the one who was to become their Master and Teacher, the one who was already their Messiah and Lord. So begins the life of faith in each of us. Yet the questions do not look like they are questions about faith at all. *'Where do you live?'* is the sort of thing any of us might say as an ice breaker the first time we meet someone.

'What do you want?' is, by contrast, a question that life asks us: a question about the meaning of our existence, our aims and plans, our hopes and dreams. And, although there are plenty of voices constantly telling us what we should want (in order to be good consumers, good citizens and good company), *'What do you want?'* is a question which ultimately we have to answer for ourselves, if we wish to live as mature and responsible human beings.

What do we want post Covid-19? Can we dream big? Can we hope large? Can we 'build back better'? Christian faith says that the answer to our deepest desires (including the answer to our desires for our society) is to be found in Christ Jesus. The Word was made flesh; he dwelt among us (or, more literally, he 'set up his tent among us' - Jn 1: 14); and in that way the sacred became secular, the divine became human. That's what we celebrated (with all the limitations imposed by Covid-19) just a few weeks ago at Christmas. Consequently, if (like the first disciples) we find ourselves asking Jesus: *'Where do you live?'* the answer is: 'With you!' Wherever humanity is; especially wherever struggling, hurting, broken humanity is.

Ask yourself: *'What do I want?'* I guess your response will centre on those most basic things: food, shelter, warmth, security, a sense of belonging. What does anyone want? The assurance that they matter; that they are not alone; that they will not be abandoned; that they are respected for who they are and not for their utility or their achievements; that there is hope; freedom from anxiety and the freedom to live in peace.

Yet there are so many who lack hope, who have been robbed of self-respect, who live in isolation, who are overlooked and disregarded. Not only individuals but our culture and our planet all stand in need of healing. Pope Francis, on this Peace Sunday, asks us to affirm this truth: that *'a culture of care is the path to peace'*. In the face of what he famously called 'the globalisation of indifference' back in 2013 during his first pastoral visit outside Rome, to the refugee camps of Lampedusa, we need to reaffirm the truth that Christ lives where we are; that we shall meet him in the hungry and the thirsty, the naked and the sick and the imprisoned - in other words, in people who may look far from 'Christ like' (which is how he promised he would meet us in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats - Mt 25: 31-46).

Only by acts of care will we recognise him. Only by lives of service shall we meet him crucified, yes; but also risen, the source of new life. Only by going out to the places where he went, among the sinners and tax collectors, the lepers and outcasts, with Christ like actions of compassion, shall we truly hear his voice: the voice that spoke the Beatitudes; the voice that commanded us to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us; the voice that refused to hate his own persecutors and thus broke the endless cycle of violence: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!' (Lk 23: 34).

A culture of care does not stop at nice words and the gentle mopping of fevered brows, important though these be. A culture of care refuses to treat another human being as a disposable means to an end. A culture of care refuses to harden our hearts, reducing our opponents to caricatures who may be hated with impunity: even when estranged, they remain our brothers and sisters. A culture of care refuses to accept that warfare (or the preparation for warfare - disturbingly, Britain is now the second largest arms exporter in the world) is an ethically acceptable response to the undoubted injustices in our world. Pope Francis has put it plainly: *'We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits ... Never again war!'* (Fratelli Tutti, n 258).

What do we want? Food and shelter, warmth and belonging, for all God's children. Where does Christ live? Right there in our struggles, our wounds and our hopes, and in the groaning of our planet under our onslaught on its natural resources. 'Come and see', says Jesus. Let us follow him. Let us dedicate ourselves to working together to build a world in which all belong, none are excluded and the rights of each and every person are respected. Together, let us build a culture of care.

By Fr Rob Esdaile, Pax Christi

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