

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



Christmas Day Mass

Sunday 25 December 2022

Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession

- 1 **O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:**

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

- 2 **Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above:
glory to God
in the highest:**

- 3 **Yea, Lord we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:**

Greeting & Introduction

Fr Dave greets everyone present.

R. And with your spirit.

Lighting of the Christmas Candle

Collect

Great and loving God,
on this most holy day,
together with Christians throughout the world,
we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Fill us with wonder on this holy day:
let us treasure in our hearts what we have been told,
that our lives may proclaim
your great and gentle mercy.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
your Word made flesh,
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

(Luke 2: 1-14)

A reading from St Luke's Gospel

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace to all who enjoy his favour.'

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Carol

- 1 Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echo still their joyous strains.

***Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!***

- 2 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
th'infant Christ, the new-born King.

Traditional French Carol (1862)

Gospel

(John 1: 1-5, 9-14)

The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word:
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh or will of man
but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily



Blessing of the Crib

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have shown your love.
When our need for a Saviour was great
you sent your Son to be born of Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy and love.
Bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise up our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Saviour of all,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

Intercessions

Let us pray that the love God has shown us in the gift of his Son may inspire us to love one another.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For peace in the world, especially in Ukraine and in the land of Christ's birth. In a special way, we remember our sisters and brothers in the parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary and St James the Less in Jordan.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For those who find Christmas difficult because they are lonely or have nowhere to call home, because they are missing someone or struggling with what life has handed them, because they are in prison or in a refugee camp.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For those who are sick, those mourning the loss of a loved one, and for anyone who is far from home, especially those who serve us in the armed forces.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For those who are dear to us; those who have died, especially Lillian Reay and Margaret Merriman; and for those we are remembering this weekend, especially Arthur & Molly Whalley, Matthew Shaw, and all the people of this parish community.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

Now let us ask Mary, the mother of the newborn King, to pray for us all: **Hail Mary...**

Liturgy of the Eucharist



Preparation of the Gifts

Music: "For unto us a child is born" – G F Handel

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

Lord,
accept our gifts on this joyful feast.
By our communion with your Son,
may we become more like him
who joins our lives to yours,
for he is Lord for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
Holy Lord, Holy Lord, God of hosts.
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed is he
who comes in the name,
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

The Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R. And with your spirit.

Breaking of the Bread

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation to Communion

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**R. Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion



- 1 Away in a manger,
no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head,
the stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus
asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing,
the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus
no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus!
Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side
until morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask thee to stay

close by me for ever,
and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven,
to live with thee there.

Prayer after Communion

Lord,
as we rejoice in the birth of your Son,
help us to love one another
and to live in peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

Concluding Rite

Blessing & Dismissal

The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Go in the peace and joy of Christ.

R. Thanks be to God.

Final Hymn

- 1 **Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.**
- 2 **Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns,
let us our songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**
- 3 **He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, and wonders of his love.**

Isaac Watts (1719)



Acknowledgements

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Christmas in Heaven



In all the joy of Christmas, there can be sadness too – especially if we're missing a loved one who has died. The following poem was penned by a mother, Wanda Bencke, whose young daughter died. She imagines her daughter saying:

**I see the countless Christmas Trees
Around the world below
With tiny lights, like Heavens stars
Reflecting in the snow.
The sight is so spectacular,
Please wipe away a tear
For I am spending Christmas
With Jesus Christ this year.**

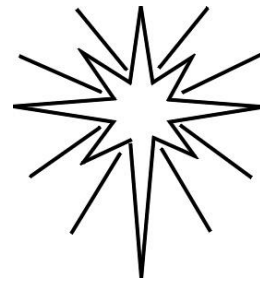
**I hear many Christmas songs
That people hold so dear,
But the sounds of music can't compare
With the Christmas Choir up here.
I have no words to tell you,
The joy their voices bring;
For it's beyond description
To hear an angel sing.**

**I know how much you miss me
For I feel your breaking heart;
But through our memories, oh so dear
We're never far apart.
I can't tell you of the splendour
Or the peace that's in this place,
Can you just imagine Christmas
With our Saviour face to face?**

**I'll ask him to light your spirit
As I tell him of your love;
Then pray for one another
As you lift your eyes above.
So let your heart be joyful
And let your spirit sing
For I am spending Christmas in heaven
And I'm walking with the King.**



A Christmas Table Prayer



**Loving God,
on this Christmas Day
we give thanks that Jesus, your Son,
has come into our world
bringing us gifts of peace and joy.**

**Bless us as we sit down together
for our Christmas meal.**

**Bless the food we share,
and help us to remember those who are hungry.**

**Be with our neighbours and our friends,
all who are lonely, sick
or away from home.**

**We pray that our departed loved ones
may now sit at your table in heaven.**

**May the joy of this feast give us strength and light,
now and in the days ahead.**

Amen.



Prayer for the New Year

**Holy God,
as we enter this new year,
we thank you for your presence with us
in all the years of our lives.**

**We have known joy, and also sorrow,
success and failure,
and through it all, you have been with us
– the companion of all our journeys.**

**Much of life is fleeting
and so we thank you for things that endure:
the love of faithful friends,
wisdom gained from experience,
the reliability of nature,
and your steadfast love.**

**We thank you for this new year which awaits us.
Take us by the hand and lead us on.
Amen.**