

# PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



## Celebrating Good Friday at Home

### Preparation

This prayer service is for an individual or for those who share a home together. It is based on the liturgy taking place in churches all over the world at 3.00 pm. There are three parts: the reading of the Passion, prayers for the Church and the world, and adoration of the Cross. A simple crucifix would be a good prayer focus.

*The service begins with a short time of silence.*

### THE PASSION

*(John 18: 1-19: 42)*

*If you want to read the Passion in parts:*

N = Narrator      J = Jesus  
C = Crowd          O = Other

N The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kedron valley. There was a garden there, and he went into it with his disciples. Judas the traitor knew the place well, since Jesus had often met his disciples there, and he brought the cohort to this place together with a detachment of guards sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees, all with lanterns and torches and weapons. Knowing everything that was going to happen to him, Jesus then came forward and said:

J Who are you looking for?

N They answered:

**C Jesus the Nazarene.**

N He said:

J I am he.

N Now Judas the traitor was standing among them. When Jesus said, 'I am he', they moved back and fell to the ground. He asked them a second time:

J Who are you looking for?

N They said:

**C Jesus the Nazarene.**

N Jesus replied:

J I have told you that I am he. If I am the one you are looking for, let these others go.

N This was to fulfil the words he had spoken: 'Not one of those you gave me have I lost'. Simon Peter, who carried a sword, drew it and wounded the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter:

J Put your sword back in its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?

N The cohort and its captain and the Jewish guards seized Jesus and bound him. They took him first to Annas, because Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had suggested to the Jews, 'It is better for one man to die for the people'.

Simon Peter, with another disciple, followed Jesus. This disciple, who was known to the high priest, went with Jesus into the high priest's palace, but Peter stayed outside the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who was keeping the door and brought Peter in. The maid on duty at the door said to Peter:

O Aren't you another of that man's disciples?

N He answered,

O I am not.

N Now it was cold, and the servants and guards had lit a charcoal fire and were standing there warming themselves; so Peter stood there too, warming himself with the others.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered:

J I have spoken openly for all the world to hear; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple where all the Jews meet together. I have said nothing in secret. But why ask me? Ask my hearers what I taught: they know what I said.

N At these words, one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a slap in the face, saying:

O Is that the way to answer the high priest?

N Jesus replied:

J If there is something wrong in what I said, point it out; but if there is no offence in it, why do you strike me?

N Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas, the high priest.

As Simon Peter stood there warming himself, someone said to him:

O Aren't you another of his disciples?

N He denied it saying:

O I am not.

N One of the high priest's servants, a relation of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said:

O Didn't I see you in the garden with him?

N Again Peter denied it; and at once a cock crew.

N They then led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. It was now morning. They did not go into the Praetorium themselves or they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover. So Pilate came outside to them and said:

O What charge do you bring against this man?

N They replied:

**C If he were not a criminal, we should not be handing him over to you.**

N Pilate said:

O Take him yourselves, and try him by your own Law.

N The Jews answered:

**C We are not allowed to put a man to death.**

N This was to fulfil the words Jesus had spoken indicating the way he was going to die. So Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him, and asked:

O Are you the king of the Jews?

N Jesus replied:

J Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?

N Pilate answered,

O Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?

N Jesus replied:

J Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent me being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.

N Pilate said:

O So you are a king then?

N Jesus answered:

J It is you who say it. Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this; to bear witness to the truth, and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.

N Pilate said:

O Truth? What is that?

N And with that he went out again to the Jews and said:

O I find no case against him. But according to a custom of yours I should release one prisoner at the Passover; would you like me, then, to release the king of the Jews?

N At this they shouted:

**C Not this man, but Barabbas.**

N Barabbas was a brigand.

Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged; and after this, the soldiers twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him and saying:

**C Hail, king of the Jews!**

N and they slapped him in the face. Pilate came outside again and said to them:

O Look, I am going to bring him out to you to let you see that I find no case.

N Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said:

O Here is the man.

N When they saw him the chief priests and the guards shouted:

**C Crucify him! Crucify him!**

N Pilate said:

O Take him yourselves and crucify him: I can find no case against him.

N The Jews replied:

**C We have a Law, and according to the Law he ought to die, because he has claimed to be the son of God.**

N When Pilate heard them say this his fears increased. Re-entering the Praetorium, he said to Jesus:

O Where do you come from?

N But Jesus made no answer. Pilate then said to him:

O Are you refusing to speak to me? Surely you know I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?

N Jesus replied:

J You would have no power over me if it had not been given you from above; that is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater guilt.

N From that moment Pilate was anxious to set him free, but the Jews shouted:

**C If you set him free you are no friend of Caesar's; anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar.**

N Hearing these words, Pilate had Jesus brought out, and seated himself on the chair of judgement at a place called the Pavement, in Hebrew Gabbatha. It was Passover Preparation Day, about the sixth hour. Pilate said to the Jews:

O Here is your king.

N They said:

**C Take him away, take him away. Crucify him!**

N Pilate said:

O Do you want me to crucify your king?

N The chief priests answered:

**C We have no king except Caesar.**

N So in the end Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

N They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out of the city to the place of the skull or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the middle. Pilate wrote out a notice and had it fixed to the cross; it ran: 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews.' This notice was read by many of the Jews, because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city, and the writing was in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. So the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate:

**C You should not write 'King of the Jews', but 'This man said: I am King of the Jews'.**

N Pilate answered:

O What I have written, I have written.

N When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another:

**C Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it.**

N In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled: 'They shared out my clothing among them. They cast lots for my clothes.' This is exactly what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother:

J Woman, this is your son.

N Then to the disciple he said:

J This is your mother.

N And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.

After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the scripture perfectly he said:

J I am thirsty.

N A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said:

J It is accomplished;

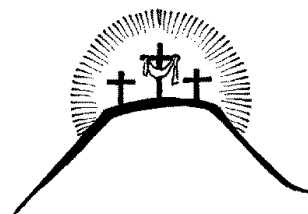
N and bowing his head he gave up the spirit.

*All kneel and pause for a moment.*

N It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during the Sabbath - since that Sabbath was a day of special solemnity - the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they found that he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it - trustworthy evidence, and he knows he speaks the truth - and he gives it so that you may believe as well. Because all this happened to fulfil the words of scripture: 'Not one bone of his will be broken', and again, in another place scripture says: 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced'.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus - though a secret one because he was afraid of the Jews - asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well - the same one who had first come to Jesus at night-time - and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, following the Jewish burial custom.

At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus there.



## **THE PRAYERS**

*We come now to the Solemn Intercessions. These are the oldest prayers we have – they date back to the 2nd century. The following is a shortened version:*

- 1 For the Church: that God may guard her, unite her, and help her to show his love and mercy. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 2 For Pope Francis: that God may keep him safe and help him to bring hope to all who believe. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 3 For Archbishop Malcom and his assistant bishops, for our priests and deacons, for those who live the consecrated life and for all the lay faithful: that we may walk in the light of the Gospel. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 4 For those preparing to be baptised, the children preparing for First Communion, young people preparing for confirmation, and couples getting ready for marriage. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 5 For the unity of Christians: that all who follow Christ may witness to his love and example. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 6 For our Jewish brothers and sisters to whom the Lord spoke first: that he may help them to be faithful to his covenant. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 7 For those who do not believe in Christ: that they may walk with a sincere heart and seek the truth. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 8 For those who do not believe in God: that they may see the good works done by those who believe as a testament to God's love. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 9 For those in public office: that they may keep us safe and guide us in peace. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
- 10 For those in any kind of tribulation: that God may watch over them and come to their aid. Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**

*An additional prayer for peace in the Holy Land, in Ukraine and other places tormented by war and violence:*

Let us pray for the peoples in the Holy Land, in Ukraine and in all war zones of the world, for those who have fled the dread of violence and have been deprived of their homes, for all women and men who stand up with their lives to ward off evil and to protect the weak and the persecuted.

Almighty and eternal God,  
you have compassion for the lowly and the poor,  
but you throw down the oppressors.  
As you guided Israel out of slavery in Egypt,

so save in our days all victims of war and violence.  
Change the hearts of evildoers,  
and let peace be victorious.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
**R. Amen.**



### **The Lord's Prayer**

Now let us pray in the words Jesus himself gave us:

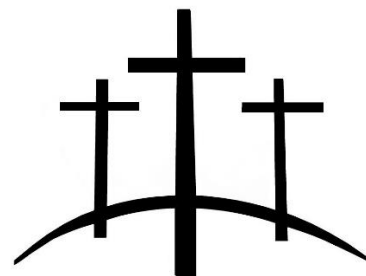
**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

### **ADORATION OF THE CROSS**



The service concludes with a simple veneration of the Cross. Invite those present to take hold of the crucifix in turn and venerate it with a gesture that is meaningful for them – this might be to kiss the Cross, or to hold it close, or simple to gaze upon it.

*The service ends as it began in silence.*



### **Acknowledgements**

Passion Reading from *The Jerusalem Bible* © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd.