

Sunday 26 July 2020



### St. James' Day

The Church of England is producing a series of prayers and acts of worship for those unable to attend church, available here <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-liturgy-and-prayer-resources>.

The readings and collect and a sermon for today are below, which you can also use in the week ahead.

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#### 2 Corinthians 4: 7-15

<sup>7</sup>But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup>We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup>We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>11</sup>For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. <sup>12</sup>So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. <sup>13</sup>It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, <sup>14</sup>because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. <sup>15</sup>All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

#### Matthew 20: 20-28

<sup>20</sup>Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of him. <sup>21</sup>'What is it you want?' he asked. She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.'

<sup>22</sup>'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?' 'We can,' they answered. <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.' <sup>24</sup>When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. <sup>25</sup>Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – <sup>28</sup>just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

#### Collect for St. James' Day

Merciful God, whose holy apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ and followed him even to death: help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world, to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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#### Let us pray:

Father, we bring before you in our prayers today the church throughout the world. We remember all in ministry, especially those who are serving in deprived or violent areas of the world; all those who are in personal danger for teaching others about you. May they all feel the reassuring presence, blessing and power of your love.

Lord in your mercy,

#### Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, you know the secrets of life and death. You know the sorrows of our hearts. We ask that you give to all who suffer your comfort and peace. May we always trust you for the future; and may we face every new circumstance of life with courage, patience and hope, in the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, in your mercy

#### Hear our prayer

Jesus, Lord of life and conqueror of death, look with compassion on those who grieve for the loss of a dear one. Let them know that you are with them even in the darkest hours; and in your presence may they find courage, comfort and peace

Lord, in your mercy

#### Hear our prayer

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Our YouTube channel is:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDx266HLh9ShYeBJnON8ODg>

Look for this week's services.

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### **Carol McCabe's Homily – 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.

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

In the far northwest of Spain, in the region of Galicia, stands the ancient city of Santiago de Compostela. The grand cathedral of Santiago, St James in English, was built in the late eleventh century over the site of the supposed tomb of the apostle, whose bones had been miraculously transported to Spain following his martyrdom at the hands of Herod Agrippa, as reported in the Acts of the Apostles.

The site of the burial was rediscovered in the ninth century, and so Compostela became the most famous pilgrim shrine in Christian Europe, and today thousands of pilgrims flock to worship at St James's tomb. I actually know people who have done this and have witnessed their wonder-meant upon their return.

As with many saints, the life of St James is a mixture of fact and fiction but from what I have read, it seems that he was the son of Zebedee, and was called along with this brother John to be one of Jesus's twelve apostles who would accompany him on his ministry.

James appears in the lists of apostles in the gospels as well as in Acts and they were given the nickname "Boanerges" (sons of thunder) by Jesus; some believing this to be a reference to their tempers. They seem to have had an especially close relationship with Jesus, along with Simon Peter which is emphasised on numerous further occasions – it is these three who are present with him on the mount of Transfiguration, and again are called apart with him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The mix of fact and fiction gets even more confusing as there is another James, the son of Alphaeus, who is listed ninth in the list of the twelve. To this James we give the name St James the Less, in contrast to St James the Great, the apostle we celebrate today and it's important not to confuse the two.

Matthew's story of James and John narrated in today's gospel reading I shall come back to, but for now we are able to sketch out an outline of James:

The brother of John and son of Zebedee, a fisheries worker by trade called into the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. Later legend records that James was an evangelist in Iberia, modern-day Spain and Portugal, before his death, but for a number of reasons this seems unlikely. His death is recorded as mentioned in the book of Acts, in 44 AD. In terms of

biography, we can go not much further.

Just for a moment let's think of the most important decision you can ever remember taking. Perhaps it was to get married, or have children. Or was it to move to a new town or country, or to train for a new job? Might it even have been to become a Christian? Take a few moments to think quietly ...for me it was the move over 20 years ago now from Middlesex to Blackrod. I often wonder what would have happened if my husband Brian had taken redundancy instead of relocation, which was the choice back in 1998.

So now consider James, who along with his brother upon Jesus' call left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him. James and his brother take the life-changing decision in an instant to follow this rabbi who was previously unknown to them. Had they any idea of his reputation? Did they think about the consequences? Would James have taken a different path had he known that on account of Jesus he would die by the sword less than 15 years later?

So, what does become clear, as we read today's gospel reading from Matthew, is that perhaps James's motives were not altogether pure.

As we have heard Matthew places a request to Jesus into the mouth of James and John's mother Salome, but if we were to read the account in Mark's gospel we would see that this request came from the brothers themselves, so are we to understand that by joining the twelve, James and his brother or their family, had fantasies of power?

The other disciples are angry, but Jesus reassures them with the promise that those who are great are in fact servants of others. We know little of James' specifically after the resurrection, but we do know that, as a servant of the early church, he met his end for his beliefs.

As always we must try and see what we are being told today, and how this legacy that James has left must make a difference to the way we live our lives as Christian disciples here in the year 2020.

Among the pilgrims going up to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela, there are, as with us all, a mixture of motives, some good, some bad. Many no doubt go to honour God and seek his will, asking for James's prayers in their quest to become better human beings.

Others perhaps go out of curiosity, to enjoy the spectacle of the cathedral and its dramatic ceremonies. And maybe some go to enjoy a walking holiday in the Pyrenees with a bit of history and a sense of destination at their journey's end. For most, if they're honest, there is probably a mixture of all these.

I asked you earlier to think of a key decision in your own life. Now think what motivated you to make that decision – again, take a few moments to think quietly ... for us it was an answer to prayer for redirection in our lives.

Being a Christian makes our motives no more pure or noble than anyone else’s, just as for James, he may have been drawn to thoughts of power and influence as much as service and sacrifice.

But the example of James does teach us that making bold decisions matters. First century Judaea, a bit like today’s Britain, was a place of political and economic turmoil. Out of the uproar in that time of change, led by James and his fellow apostles, emerged a gospel and a Church which would change.

To decide to own the name of Christ today lifts us above the narrow vision of fear which is dragging so many people into suspicion and uncertainty especially as we come slowly out of lockdown through the pandemic.

Instead we become part of an inclusive and justice-focused group where, as Jesus himself teaches us, we are not to be served, but to serve. And there are so many ways in which we can continue to serve our communities at this time. And praise God for those who have worked and continue to work alongside us and for us.

Despite his shortcomings James joined that group, and we can be his heirs in taking the decision to follow Jesus in the way that leads to fullness of life for all God’s children. Amen

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**Do contact us if we can offer any help or support at this time.**

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**Sunday worship has now resumed at St. John’s!**

It is different!

You are very welcome to attend at 9.30 a.m. each Sunday, but we ask that you respect the guidance given on arrival.

Numbers are restricted.

Thank you and God bless you.

Vicar and Church Wardens.

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## SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

There has understandably been a lot of concern from parents regarding the arrangements for school admission forms this year. Obviously church school admissions policies are the remit of each school and their Governors. However Chris Bracegirdle as chair of the Bishop Fraser Trust MAT has sent out this helpful information regarding applications for Canon Slade and St James.

"At a meeting of Canon Slade Governing Board held on 7 July, the Chair of Governors gave an update on recording of church attendance for the purposes of school admissions. The Bishop Fraser Trust Schools (Canon Slade, St James's Farnworth and Bolton St Katherine's Academy) take the view that places of worship were open during this academic year between 1 September 2019 and 8 March 2020 and that will be the only period during the current academic year for which attendance records will be required. The decision has to be ratified by the Regional Schools Commissioner who needs to approve a variation in admission arrangements"

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Bolton’s Humanitarian Food Hub is led by Bolton Council and supported by many organisations including Urban Outreach, Bolton at Home, Seddon’s and Bolton CVS. We are organising collections again in our parishes. If you would like to make a donation, here are the details of where you can drop off items.

Saturdays 25<sup>th</sup> July, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 10 am – 11 am  
St John’s Church Wingates, outside or porch area.  
St James’ Church Daisy Hill, outside or porch area.  
Car park adjacent to St Bartholomew’s Church

At any time: Blackrod Vicarage door step  
c/o James Wilson 13 Bellwood Westhoughton BL5 3RT

Current Priority Items Tinned fruit, Tinned custard

Also needed. Tinned meat, veg, chopped tomatoes, fruit, 500g boxes of breakfast cereal, Cordial, Long life milk, Custard powder, 1kg bags of rice, Pasta (500g), Baked beans, Tinned soup, Jars of pasta sauce, Tinned pulses, Tinned vegetables (sweetcorn, peas, carrots and potatoes), Biscuits, Tinned fish, Tea, jars of baby food (different ages), Incontinence pads, Male toiletries, Nappies, Wipes.

