

Wednesday June 10th, Wednesday in Week Ten of Ordinary Time Year 2

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the advice from the government and the medics about what we should be doing in this time of crisis.

And I hope everyone is praying together for our all our intentions in this time of need.

As our Old Testament history continues in today's first reading, I Kings 18:20-39, we have the dramatic story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Baal was the fertility god worshipped by Jezebel and Ahab. At issue was the question of which god controls the fertility of the land. While the Israelites were in the desert, their God was seen as a Warrior God, but now they were settled they needed fertility in their land and among their animals. Many worshipped both to be on the safe side. Ahab met Elijah at Mount Carmel and we see the calm behaviour of Elijah contrasted with the activity of the ecstatic prophets of Baal, who dance first on one leg, then the other, in a seemingly early version of the Hokey Cokey. As a result they see that there is only one, true God, and that God must be worshipped by all, "*The Lord is God' they cried, 'The Lord is God.'*"

In the Gospel today, Matthew 5:17-19, Jesus, in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, points out that his teaching is not an abolition of the Old Law, enshrined in the Old Testament, but rather a completion of it. The Law must be interpreted in the proper spirit by the teachers and promoted by them in full, unlike the actions of the Pharisees. This is a call to us to act upon the teaching of Jesus, and then to teach it to others by our words and actions. But firstly we have to *know* it. Perhaps we could pledge ourselves to open our Bibles a little more, or pray the readings of the Mass. Certainly a good reading of the Sermon on the Mount, the whole of Matthew chapter five is a good start.

Loving Lord, I desire to learn more of You and have a heart and mind that is focussed upon Jesus. I long to grow in grace and in a knowledge of Him, and so I pray that You would develop in me a deep desire to diligently study Your Word and learn to apply the truths and principles within my own life, to Your praise and glory.

But Father, I don't just want to have a head full of biblical statistics, but a heartfelt knowledge of biblical truth and godly love. I want to live my life in a way that is pleasing to You, and be used by You as a witness to Your grace and goodness, as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto You.

Help me to read and retain all that I learn from Your Word, and may I learn to live like the Lord Jesus, in total dependence upon You, to Your praise and glory. In Christ Our Lord. Amen

Incidentally, talking of the Hokey Cokey, did you know it was an anti-Catholic song composed by Puritans during the 18th century in an attempt to mock the actions and language of priests leading the Latin Mass? The priest 'put's his hand in' over the Eucharist, says the words 'Hoc est enim corpus meum,' 'this is my body', which is parodied as 'do the hokey cokey.' The priest, as he would have his back to the people would then 'turn around' as he lifts up the host. As late as 2008 the Catholic Bishops of Scotland tried to ban it's usage at Celtic/Rangers football matches, due to its negative religious connotations. Seriously.

Yesterday I was sent a lovely prayer to the Holy Spirit, particularly as a night prayer, but very prescient in these strange times, which I will share with you.

*Come Holy Spirit,
wrap your love around me,
protecting me from harm.
Send your peace upon me at night,
to keep me from calm.
Help me with your presence,
so troubles I can bear.
Instil your joy within me,
for sleep without a care.
Inspire me with your gifts
and patience please, please send.
Come close
because I wish to know you as a friend,
And comfort me forever
when my life on earth will end.
Amen.*

As that is an evening prayer, why don't we sing an evening hymn, 'The Day Thou Gavest Lord Is Ended' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeC6M_RD3oE I always like the line 'the sun that bids us rest is waking our brethren 'neath the western sky,' as it always makes me think of my Australian family getting up and saying their morning prayers and preparing whatever they have in Australia for breakfast, as I'm going off to sleep after saying my night prayers. I wonder if there is an Australian version of that line? 'The sun that bids us rest is waking our brethren 'bove the western sky'? Over to my sister to mail me an answer on that one!

That prayer asks the Spirit to give us patience, and we still patiently wait for news from the Diocese about opening our Church doors, but I will let you know as soon as I have information. If stewards are

needed, and you would be willing to volunteer, please let myself or Eileen know, so that we can be ready in advance. Many thanks to those who have already expressed their willingness.

I attach a picture of the flowers in Church on the Lady Altar, they are absolutely stunning, so thanks to our flower ladies for their brilliant works of art which really enhance our prayers and liturgies, and really add to the ambience of the videoed Mass.

Cadbury's Crème Eggs are still available in the porch, in return for a picture of Tobias, which will be judged by him. I've been asked to keep this running for another week, so the result will be announced next Sunday, 14th June! If you are passing the Church check out the pictures already there!

Mass for the Feast of the Holy Trinity is available all week at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6QctJirdk4&feature=youtu.be>

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). Any suggestions for ways to keep our faith and spirits up at this time are most welcome!

And remember, St. Bernadette's is not closed, though the building is; we're just doing things differently for a while, until we are allowed to gather together once more, more stronger, more faithful, more loving, more creative, and more grateful for the amazing community that is St. Bernadette's.

With love and faith in Jesus.

Fr. P.