

Friday November 20th, Friday in the Thirty-Third Week in Ordinary Time, Year II

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the guidance we receive to overcome these strange times, and continuing to pray for all our needs at this time.

After getting soaked in the cemetery on Wednesday, yesterday was such a beautiful day. Jury is out on today, I think! Actually, perhaps not...

Today in Revelations 10:8-11 St. John is told by the voice from heaven to take the scroll and eat it, where it will taste like honey in his mouth. The idea of eating the scroll and prophesying comes from the prophet Ezekiel. When the Jews were learning the alphabet, they used a mixture of flour and honey to make the letters. If the child got the sound correct he was allowed to lick the letter off the slate. So John eats the words from the scroll and is told '*You are to prophesy to many different nations, and countries and languages and emperors.*'

In Luke 19:45-48 we have the incident of Jesus driving out the money lenders and market traders from the Temple, with Jesus preaching in the Temple every day, with people hanging on his every words. Let us have respect and honour for the Temple of God, reminding ourselves that we ourselves are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Father,

help me to remember that my body is a temple for Your very presence.

May my hands and feet bring You honour and praise

as I live righteously by Your Spirit.

Amen.

Let's ask the Holy Spirit to come down into our hearts and minds as we sing 'Come Down o Love Divine' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXO4rqBQOAU> And perhaps we could prayer the prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your spirit, Lord, and they shall be created.

And thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

O God, who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit;

grant that by the gift of that same Spirit

we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation.

Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And today we remember St. Edmund. It is surprising to learn that St George was not the first patron saint of England. That honour was originally held by St Edmund, or Edmund the Martyr, King of East Anglia in the 9th century AD. Born on Christmas Day 841 AD, Edmund succeeded to the throne of East Anglia in 856. Brought up as a Christian, he fought alongside King Alfred of Wessex against the pagan Viking and Norse invaders (the Great Heathen Army) until 869/70 when his forces were defeated and Edmund was captured by the Vikings. He was ordered to renounce his faith and share power with the pagan Vikings, but he refused. Edmund was then bound to a tree, shot through by arrows and beheaded. The date was 20th November. His decapitated head is said to have been reunited with its body with the help of a talking wolf who protected the head and then called out 'Hic, Hic, Hic', 'Here, Here, Here' to alert Edmund's followers. In 902 his remains were moved to Bedricsworth, which is now modern Bury St. Edmunds, which of course makes sense. There King Athelstan founded a religious community to care for his shrine which became a place of national pilgrimage. St. George was made principal Patron of England during the crusades, but an attempt was made in 2006 to have St Edmund reinstated as Patron Saint of England. A petition was handed into Parliament but it was rejected by the government.

*Almighty God, by whose grace and power
your holy martyr King Edmund kept faith to the end
with you and with his people;
grant, at his prayers,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit,
that we may steadfastly endure all the arrows of the enemy,
and so be crowned with glory
in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. Amen.*

I've mentioned before that every day I send a little prayer video into school (into four schools actually) for the children's collective worship. This means that I have had a presence in school, even though I can't go into the individual bubbles that make up each class, unless with prior preparation and distinct social distancing – the weekly masses are socially distanced too, but in the large main hall. It also means that up until the Remembrance Services that were held last week, some of the children, especially in reception, had only ever seen me on video. Apparently, coming in from one of the services the teacher was praising the children for their behaviour and one of them said, '*And Father Peter! He's real! He's not just on telly. !*

Talking of being on telly, everything is set up now for us to live stream Sunday mass. The plan is to live stream Sunday morning, which will then be accessible live at 10am, but also any time for the rest of the week. We're going to have our full test run tomorrow evening with 5pm Mass, so you may like to join us online at the St. Bernadette's YouTube channel. Please note that you may have to tap or click on the 'live' window. Our site is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wzvi8I3ug8o> or just google St. Bernadette's Bispham Church YouTube. I attach a pic from this morning's test! Huge thanks to Ian for managing to get this up and running. We'll see how it goes over the weekend!

End the week with a smile.

Sunday's Bereavement Mass was recorded and is available on the YouTube at <https://youtu.be/vz7JvyVr6mQ> Texts for Mass each day can be found at <http://www.universalis.com/>

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. 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.