

Thursday January 7th, Thursday after Epiphany.

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.

And it's zero degrees out there, so take care if you are out and about. And wrap up!

We continue with John's first letter. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us. I John 3:22-4:6 reminds us that whatever we ask of God, we shall receive, because we keep his Commandments and live the kind of life that he wants - we love one another as he told us to. *'His commandments are these, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another.'*

The Gospels post-epiphany continue in the same vein, and focus on appearances of Jesus to the world through his preaching, teaching and his miracles. The readings will take us through to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday, when a voice is heard from heaven acclaiming who Christ is. In the Gospel today, Matthew 4:12-17,23-25 we see how Jesus begins his mission, following on from hearing the news that John has been arrested. He begins his preaching with the Message, 'Repent for the Kingdom of God is close at hand.' News of Jesus quickly gets round *'and those who were suffering from diseases and painful complaints... were all brought to him, and he cured them.'* In this time of pandemic let us continue to pray for the healing presence of Jesus:

*Lord, your Word speaks promises of healing and restoration
and I thank you for the miracles you still perform today.*

Today I seek those promises for all who are ill today.

*I believe in the healing power of faith and prayer
and I ask you to begin your mighty work in their lives.*

*Please reach down and surround them with supernatural peace and strength
and give them the faith to believe that all things are possible for You.*

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

And let us pray, in thanksgiving, for all those in our hospitals and nursing homes whose God-given ministry is to bravely share in the healing that Christ brings:

Good and gracious God, You are the source of all healing.

In You, others share in this wonderful ministry we call your 'healing presence.'

Today, we honour those who give direct care to the patients;

*And all who indirectly serve our patients as well.
We celebrate the way your grace moves through each one of them:
Revealing your healing touch, your compassionate glance,
And your consoling words.
Bless all those who serve in this healing ministry;
And strengthen them so they may be your compassionate presence to others.
Bless our patients and their families who need to feel you are with them.
May we never forget you minister to us through them as well.
We ask all of this in the name of Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Let's continue singing Christmas Carols: how about 'The Holly And The Ivy'?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgzgmEJoCSw> for a very twee version, or here's King's College doing their thing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17eHtDtZ7hs>

I should have been travelling to Lanzarote today with my mate Ed and my Australian family, but alas it's not to be, although missing a holiday is one of the least of life's difficulties at the moment, and doesn't compare to what some people have had to go through in the past nine months. Here's hoping for 2022, and in the meanwhile, here's a pic of me at a house we visited on a day out constructed at the behest of Omar Sharif who wanted a holiday home in Lanzarote. It was extraordinary, built right into a cliff, with little passages and winding stairs. Unfortunately Omar Sharif never got to enjoy his wonderful house for very long. While filming on the island, Omar Sharif, being an extremely good Bridge player, challenged a man to a very high stakes game. He added his house to the stakes, but little did he know that he was actually playing the world championship of Bridge, and lost his house during the game. After losing his house Omar Sharif never returned to the island! I hope I can next year!

Please pray for the repose of the soul of our dear friend and servant of the Parish, Peter Brennan, whose Requiem Mass we will be celebrating at 2:30pm this afternoon. *Almighty Father, source of forgiveness and salvation, grant that Peter, and all our relatives and friends who have passed from this life may, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, come to share your Eternal happiness through Christ our Lord. Amen.* From his eulogy: *'Peter adopted an Italian family who moved into the Parish, even becoming Godfather to the littlest one, Francesco. Upon hearing of Peter's death, the Father of the family who returned to Italy wrote to me, "Peter was for me like a father and the best example of a Christian. Now I pray that Peter will protect us and all the community of St. Bernadette." A wonderful epitaph, and through Peter's example, let us make it our own.'*

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.