

Thursday February 11th, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Patroness of the Diocese of Lancaster

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 'Oh, what a beautiful morning' we awake to. Chilly, but beautiful. More flow-testing in the hall this morning, before noonday Mass.

Today is the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes. On this day in 1858 our very own Bernadette Soubirous was out collecting firewood with her sister and another friend near a grotto when she saw a vision of a lovely lady. In the words of St. Bernadette, *'I raised my head and looked towards the grotto. I saw a Lady dressed in white, wearing a white dress, a blue girdle and a yellow rose on each foot, the same color as the chain of her Rosary.'* In the vision Our Lady was praying the rosary. After several appearances on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Lady appeared at the grotto again, this time identifying herself as the Immaculate Conception. *'With her two arms hanging down, she raised her eyes and looked up at the sky, and it was then that she told me, joining her hands together now at the height of her breast, that she was the Immaculate Conception. Those were the last words she ever said to me.'*

Oh ever immaculate Virgin,

*Mother of Mercy, Health of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners, Comfortess of the Afflicted,
you know our wants, our troubles, our sufferings.*

Look upon us with mercy.

When you appeared in the grotto of Lourdes,

you made it a privileged sanctuary where you dispense your favors,

and where many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities,

both spiritual and corporal.

We come, therefore, with unbounded confidence to implore your maternal intercession.

Our loving Mother, obtain our requests.

*We will try to imitate your virtues so that We may one day share your company
and bless you in eternity.*

Through your Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.

So today we just have to sing 'Immaculate Mary' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsC4yHD-Sy4>

And perhaps a prayer for the sick might be most appropriate as we think of Our Lady of Lourdes, and the many miracles there, and the present circumstances we all find ourselves in:

*Almighty God,
you are the only source of health and healing.
In you there is calm,
and the only true peace in the universe.
Grant to each one of us your children
an awareness of your presence,
and give us perfect confidence in you.
In all pain and weariness and anxiety
teach us to yield ourselves to your never-failing care,
knowing that your love and power surround us,
trusting in your wisdom and providence
to give us health and strength and peace
when your time is best;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Well the Tech Fund has gone remarkable well. Huge thanks for the amazing £3825 which has already been donated, and I know there is more to come. Many blessings for all your donations. Mrs. Satterthwaite writes to us:

Yet again, the wonderful and dynamic parishioners of St Bernadette's have risen to the challenge, set out by Father Peter, and given generously to the St Bernadette's Technical Fund. On behalf of everyone, I would like to say how much we appreciate your constant support and willingness to help in any way you can so our school can continue to thrive. As you know, moving onto Remote Learning in and out of school, at this time, has put extra pressure on the availability of devices that we are able to support both children in and of school with. The fabulous £3,000 plus, that has been kindly donated, has enabled the school to purchase 12 new laptops. All our children will benefit and indeed the photograph illustrates just how excited they were to receive the new purchases.

Let me close by saying, through these challenging times, we have indeed been blessed by your thoughtfulness and truly hope when we all gather together soon, parish and school can continue with this most treasured union so we are living out our faith together and all 'doing our best for God.'

*With a grateful heart,
Alexis Satterthwaite.
Head Teacher.*

We are blessed to have such a great school and staff as part of the family that is St. Bernadette's. Y'all have a great and sunny day.

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.