

Sunday February 14th, The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

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.

I have my second day studying NLP so once again we gratefully welcome Father Tom who will be saying this morning's mass. I believe all went well yesterday evening.

When the first Lockdown started a lot of people were saying there were going to use the time to learn a new skill, and enthusiastically took up the guitar or juggling or whatever. In the second lockdown, which coincided with dark nights and bad weather, enthusiasm was somewhat lacking.

There's a lot of enthusiasm in this Sunday's Gospel. First of all there is the enthusiasm of Jesus. Last week he told us that his primary mission on this earth was to preach the Good news of the Kingdom of God, by word and action. The miracles are signs of his preaching, but many of the miracles are made to happen through the compassion of Jesus for the sick and the suffering, and in response to people's faith. Here it states that Jesus felt sorry for the leper, and almost can't help himself. In response to the leper's faith that he can cure him Jesus says *'Of course I want to; of course I want to cure you.'* And Eileen has once again helpfully provided us with a knitted version of the scene.

The response of the leper on being cured is equally enthusiastic. Jesus tells the cured leper not to tell anyone about the miracles. But the man can't help himself. He 'can't not' talk about his miraculous cure, freely and everywhere. Such is his enthusiasm for Jesus. But there is cost to this enthusiasm. It's recorded in the Scriptures how many people involved with miracles were branded liars by religious leaders, often the one's to whom they had to show themselves to prove their healing. There are certainly a number of such incidents in the Acts of the Apostles.

But the real cost in this Gospel is for Jesus. It's difficult for us to come to terms with just how outcast all sick people were in Jesus' time, but especially lepers. The first reading, Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46, is Old Testament pastoral theology at its most brutal. Jesus put himself greatly at risk by associating and worst of all, touching a leper in the first place. His association with the lepers would certainly have incurred the wrath of the religious leaders who were stuck with their pharasaical interpretation of the law. But in associating with this outsider, out of love and compassion, it also made Jesus, in a sense, an outsider too, as he found himself having to withdraw from open places in town, to go where he could carry on his main mission, his preaching, the reason, we heard last week, that he came to earth.

St. Paul really sums all this up for us. If your faith is important to you, when, as he says, whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all you will do it for the glory of God. Being enthusiastic towards the Church means working and preaching and praying, maybe when we are tired, when it's inconvenient, when there is something else that we could be doing. It means being prepared to follow the teachings of the Church, even those we find difficult or which fit in uncomfortably with our lifestyles. It means being prepared to learn and read and pray about the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church so that whatever we do at all we are doing it with an educated conscience. And it means finding out *how* we can serve God, especially in these strange Covid times. It means putting Christ, and his teachings, and his Church, first in our lives, whatever the cost.

The Corinthians to whom St. Paul wrote did not have the New Testament so he said take me for your model. We do have the New Testament. So let us, enthusiastically, take Christ for our model.

And let's sing with great enthusiasm 'All My Hope On God Is Founded'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew>

And to get us in the mood of Lent, here's a not too taxing quiz for you. Put your feet up with a cup of tea and see how you do!

1. What biblical event does the time of Lent represent?

- A. The forty days Moses spent on Mount Sinai with God (Exodus 24:18)
- B. Jesus retreated into the wilderness, where he fasted for forty days, and was tempted by the devil
- C. The forty days and nights Elijah spent walking to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8)

2. What forms does penance take in Christian life?

- A. Penance can be expressed in many and various ways
- B. Penance can be expressed in many and various ways but above all in fasting, prayer & almsgiving.
- C. By abstaining from meat on Fridays

3. Which is the first day of Lent?

- A. Ash Wednesday
- B. Valentine's Day
- C. Shrove Tuesday
- D. Maundy Thursday

4. What is the original meaning of Lent?

- A. Autumn
- B. Spring
- C. Fast
- D. Penance

5. Which is the last Sunday of Lent?

- A. Easter Sunday
- B. Whit Sunday
- C. Palm Sunday
- D. Pentecost Sunday

6. Lent is known to be 40 days long even though from Ash Wednesday to the last Saturday of the season it is 46 days. Why?

- A. Sundays are not included
- B. Mondays are not included
- C. Counting error
- D. Saturdays are not included

7. Which feast day always comes during Lent?

- A. Annunciation
- B. Assumption
- C. St. Joseph's Feast
- D. Presentation

8. How is ash for Ash Wednesday made?

- A. By burning palms used during previous Palm Sunday
- B. By burning logs
- C. By burning books
- D. By burning clothes

9. On which day is Chrism Mass?

- A. Ash Wednesday
- B. Maundy Thursday
- C. Good Friday
- D. Palm Sunday

10. When thinking about the liturgy what is different about Good Friday?

- A. Day of fast
- B. Day of abstinence
- C. Day of penance
- D. Day when mass is not celebrated

11. Which devotion has special place during Lent?

- A. Novena
- B. Triduum
- C. Stations of the cross
- D. Retreat

12. Which of the following does not take place on Good Friday?

- A. Intercessory prayers
- B. Reading from the scriptures
- C. Consecration
- D. Veneration of the cross

13. Which two people appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration?

- A. Abraham & Noah
- B. Abraham & Adam
- C. Elijah & Elisha
- D. Moses & Elijah

14. Which three disciples went with Jesus to the Mountain?

- A. Peter, James & John
- B. Matthew, Mark & Luke
- C. Matthew, Luke & John
- D. None of the Above

15. What did Luke say the two Old Testament Saints were discussing with Jesus?

- A. Their time in heaven
- B. He didn't say
- C. His departure in Jerusalem
- D. The end of the world

16. What did the Father call Jesus on the Mountain?

- A. The greatest prophet ever

- B. The Son of Man
- C. The Word made flesh
- D. My beloved Son

17. The Romans got involved in the case regarding the trial of Jesus because...

- A. The Jewish authorities couldn't execute
- B. They didn't agree with Jewish justice
- C. They were the Conquering army
- D. They were particular about such things

18. When Pilate wanted to let Jesus go, the Jewish authorities said he would be

- A. No friend of Caesar
- B. Out of some bribe money
- C. In trouble with his wife
- D. Looking for work

19. The cause of death listed for a crucified man would be...

- A. Asphyxiation
- B. Shock
- C. Loss of blood
- D. Heart attack

20. After the resurrection the total number of witnesses who saw Jesus alive was about

- A. 500+
- B. 100
- C. 25
- D. 12

Answers at the end of this Message!

I hope you are having a great Sunday! Ooh, and Happy Valentine's Day! And don't forget Ash Wednesday, with two masses, 9am and 7pm, wish ashes being covid safely distributed!

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.

1.A 2.B 3.A 4.B 5.C 6.A 7.C 8.A 9.B 10. D 11.C 13.D 14.A 15. C 16.D 17. A 18.A 19.A 20.A