

Tuesday February 16th, Tuesday in the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time, Year 1

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.

Welcome to Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Day, Mardi Gras, the last day before Lent! Have you decided what you are doing for Lent yet? Any suggestions what I could do?

We move on though Genesis to the story of Noah. This was to condemn the great violence and evil that people inflicted on one another. Only the good were to be saved - Noah and his family along with one pair from each animal species board the ark and *'seven days later the waters of the flood appeared on earth.'* Bit of a cliff-hanger to take us into Lent!

In our last Gospel of Ordinary Time before we move on to our Lenten Cycle of readings Jesus is somewhat exasperated with the disciples don't understand that the miracles of the multiplications of loaves was not about material things, but spiritually about God's benevolence; *'Are you still without perception?'* he asks them.

God our heavenly Father,

Today I pray for spiritual insight and perception.

I confess that it is natural for me to do things my way.

I recognize that I am limited, but that you know all things.

I yield my spiritual eyesight to you so that my spiritual vision will be clear.

Your word says that Jesus Christ came to give sight to the blind and to open our eyes.

I commit my ways to you so that I can see your ways and not my own.

Make clear to me the actions you wish me to take, the words I should say,

And clarity in how best I can serve you.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let's sing 'Sweet Heart of Jesus, Fount of Love and Mercy.'

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

And today is Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Day. On this day many years ago Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confession and were 'shriven', absolved from their sins. A bell would be rung to call people to confession. This came to be called the 'Pancake Bell' and in some places is still rung today. Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast and

pancakes were the perfect way of using up these ingredients. The pancake has a very long history and featured in cookery books as far back as 1439. The tradition of tossing or flipping them is almost as old: *'And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne.'* (Pasquil's Palin, 1619). The ingredients for pancakes have come to be seen to symbolise four points of significance at this time of year: Eggs, Creation; Flour, The staff of life; Salt, Wholesomeness; and Milk, Purity. I wonder if there will be any Covid safe Pancake races this year? The most famous pancake race takes place at Olney in Buckinghamshire. According to tradition, in 1445 a woman of Olney heard the shriving bell while she was making pancakes and ran to the church in her apron, still clutching her frying pan. The Olney pancake race is now world famous. Competitors have to be local housewives and they must wear an apron and a hat or scarf, and must toss their pancake three times during the race. The first woman to complete the course and arrive at the church, serve her pancake to the bellringer and be kissed by him, is the winner.

On this Shrove Tuesday,

Help us, God, to experience You in our abundance.

When we want for nothing, may we be reminded of from where all good gifts come.

When we create, help us to connect with You, the Ultimate Creator.

*When we feast, help us to not only to be grateful,
but also let us be mindful of those who go without.*

Charge us with caring for the least of these in our midst.

*In our everyday tasks, may we be aware of your abiding presence
and experience wisdom and teaching in all that is around us.*

May even the joy of pancakes be cause for worship and praise!

May we experience You as we gather at the table.

Be in our fellowship and conversation.

And as Lent begins tomorrow,

*prepare our hearts and minds to reflect upon the temptation of Jesus for forty days and nights
and what that means for us. Amen.*

We make this and all our prayers through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

So enjoy your pancakes and have a great day! Here's a pic taken ten years ago of my old friends Paul and Chris demonstrating the pancake tossing skills at a pancake party at sacred Heart in Thornton ten years ago!

See you in Lent! Masses and Ashes at 9am and 7pm tomorrow!

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.