

Friday February 19th, 2021, Friday after Ash Wednesday

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.

The first Friday of Lent brings up the subject of Fasting. What are the rules about fasting from meat? Here's what the church has to say; *'Moreover, we should recall that every Friday of the year remains a day of penance. Each individual may substitute the traditional abstinence from meat for another practice of self-denial or personal penance, each person should strive to do some penance to atone for sin.'* (Cf Code of Canon Law, No. 1251).

Isaiah 58:1-9 reminds us that fasting, no matter how public, is useless if it is accompanied by injustice toward others. You must also share your bread with the hungry and look after the needy. Then the Lord will listen to you, and then *'will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over.'*

And Matthew 9:14-15 tells us what Jesus says about fasting. The disciples of Jesus will fast when he is taken away from them. *'Surely the bridegroom's attendants would never think of mourning as long as the bridegroom is still with them.'*

Dear Father,

How priceless is Your unfailing love.

You have fearfully and wonderfully created us. You have ordained all our days and written them in your book before we were born. All your thoughts towards us are precious.

We praise You because we are Your handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, ones You have prepared in advance for us to do.

We come before You this first Friday of Lent to humble ourselves before You, submitting to Your will for our lives. Because of You, Father, surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.

Let us be devoted to living out Your will on earth, to be more concerned with storing up treasures in Heaven than on earth.

Lead us, Lord, in the way we should go. Direct our steps and fulfil Your plans for our lives. Let our feet run swiftly to follow after You.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

On this First Friday of Lent let us sing ‘All My Hope On God Is Founded.’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2oYTtyBSxk>

It’s important to remember that fasting is not just about food. Check out the words of Pope Francis, which I’ve also attached as a prayer card/poster:

Do You Want to Fast this Lent?

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled

Fast from words; be silent and listen.

Not bad advice, methinks!

Talking about fasting, Mahatma Ghandi walked around barefoot most of the time, so he had rough feet. And he fasted a lot for spiritual and political reasons, so he was not very physically strong. And because of the fasting, you could say that he didn’t have great breath, it didn’t smell great.

So to sum it all up, you could say that Ghandi was a super-calloused-fragile-mystic-vexed-by-halitosis. I’ll get my coat. Um-diddle-iddle-iddle-um-diddlay...

Enjoy the day, and smile – even though your smile may be behind a mask it will be seen in your eyes.

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.

