

Friday February 26th, 2021, Friday in the First Week in Lent

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.

Another beautiful morning for us to wake up to! I had a lovely walk on the front yesterday to Cleveleys to get some keys cut – then discovered that Timpsons has now closed! Hey ho! A good excuse for a walk elsewhere today!

In Ezekiel 18:21-28 we are reminded in no uncertain terms that what we decide to do and what we actually do will determine our future. We must repent and stay away from sin, and then we shall live. God's mercy will not reach into the unforgiving heart, as an unforgiving heart will not accept forgiveness. But God wants to mete out mercy and forgiveness to all; *'Am I likely to take pleasure in the death of a wicked man and not prefer to see him renounce his wickedness and live?'*

'Jesus said to his disciples, *"If your virtue goes no deeper than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven."*' Matthew 5:20-26 tells us that our reconciliation must come from the heart: reconciliation not only with God, but with one another. Only then will our offerings to God be effective and acceptable.

*O God of shalom,
we have built up walls to protect ourselves from our enemies,
but those walls also shut us off from receiving your love.
Break down those walls.
Help us to see that the way to your heart
is through the reconciliation of our own hearts with our enemies.
Bless them and us, that we may come to grow in love
for each other and for you,
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.*

'You shall cross the barren desert... Be Not Afraid' might make a lovely hymn for this Friday in our barren Lenten landscape: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_kgDXcKIw

Today is Lent Fast day, a Day of Prayer for the Needy and Hungry of the World. This year CAFOD are particularly focusing on those who need water. Isaiah 55:1: *'Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty.'*

*Loving God,
we hear your call
to all who thirst
for a brighter future:
Come to the water.
Pour out your Spirit upon us
and lead us to walk
alongside one another.
Let a desire for change
well up within us.
May we overflow with
compassion and love.
And as a stream
wears away stone,
may we reshape
our world together
to reflect your kingdom
of hope for all.
Amen.*

And don't forget that you can donate to CAFOD by sponsoring our Parish Ladies who are 'Walking for Water' on their sponsorship page. Here's the link

<https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/karen-claire-carla-and-liz-are-walking-for-wa2021>

Yesterday we recorded another set of Stations of the Cross, and they are up there on the YouTube channel for you to access and pray anytime. Cheers to Ian and Paul.

And this photo was taken yesterday in the Church garden. A beautiful sign of Spring – an dhoop springing eternally yet again.

Have a beautiful 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.