

Saturday February 27th, 2021, Saturday 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 to wake up to. The good weather really helps our time in lockdown.

And we dip into the Book of Deuteronomy today. Deuteronomy 26:16-19 reminds us of the Law of Moses, *'The Lord you God today commands you to observe these laws and customs; you must keep and observe them with all your heart and with all your soul... and you will be a people consecrated to the Lord,'* and He will be your God.

And for our Gospel today we dip into the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:43-48. To be children of our Father in heaven, we must do more for others than the pagans do. *'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'* It's hard for us to recognise how revolutionary this teaching of Jesus actually was – it was such statements that led to his death. When Jesus says *'You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect,'* he is lovingly showing the great potentiality he sees in us to be the best people we possibly can be – after all, we were all made in the image of God, and restored to that image at the moment of our baptism.

Loving Father,

thank You for the example of Jesus Who cried, Father forgive on the cross.

Help me to be one that freely and willingly prays forgiveness over those who are my enemies, and those who, for whatever reason, dislike or try to harm me.

Forgive my enemies Lord, and all those who have tried to hurt or harmed me.

Give me the grace to show them the love of Christ in my actions and attitudes towards them.

Give me the grace, not only to truly forgive all my enemies

but also to bless those who persecute me,

for in so doing I see a dim reflection of Your enormous grace towards me,

for which I praise and thank You.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The children from St. Bernadette's are taking part in a video in which all the schools in Blackpool send in a little segment, with a prayer and a hymn, on a certain theme, but all based around the Stations of the Cross. We were given the theme 'forgiveness', appropriately enough given today's

Gospel. This is the prayer I wrote for them, a 'Children's stations of the Cross on the Theme of Forgiveness':

<i>Pilate unfairly condemned Jesus to death.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave him.</i>
<i>The soldiers made Jesus carry a heavy cross.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave them.</i>
<i>The people made Jesus fall down the first time.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave them.</i>
<i>Jesus met his blessed mother Mary.</i>	<i>And Jesus loved her.</i>
<i>Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his cross.</i>	<i>And Jesus thanked him.</i>
<i>Veronica wiped the blood off Jesus' face.</i>	<i>And Jesus was grateful.</i>
<i>Someone pushed Jesus down on to the ground.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave them.</i>
<i>Some women of Jerusalem wept for Jesus.</i>	<i>And Jesus told them to weep for people who do not ask for forgiveness.</i>
<i>People laughed at Jesus when he fell the third time.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave them.</i>
<i>They harshly pulled the clothes off Jesus' back.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave them.</i>
<i>They nailed Jesus to the cross.</i>	<i>And Jesus forgave them.</i>
<i>Jesus died on the cross.</i>	<i>And his last words were 'Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.'</i>
<i>They soldiers took Jesus down from the cross.</i>	<i>And Mary forgave them.</i>
<i>They laid Jesus in a borrowed grave.</i>	<i>And from heaven, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit continues to forgive us.</i>

God our Heavenly Father, on Good Friday Jesus showed us the true meaning of forgiveness, when he suffered and died for us, so that all our wrong choices could be washed away. Thank you for your forgiveness, and help us to forgive one another. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Over in Hong Kong yesterday Martin and Liza celebrated the 36th anniversary of their first date. Aw bless. Is it me, or does it look as if they are pouring a can of Fanta on to their Vietnamese meal?

Mass at 5pm today and 10am tomorrow are live streamed, and we have our Holy Hour at 12noon tomorrow. Enjoy this lovely weekend.

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.