

Tuesday March 16th, 2021, Tuesday in the Fourth Week of 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.

Bit of a dull morning, but we are promised a lovely sunny afternoon, so I'll see you on the prom!

Today we go to the book of Ezekiel, and the reading gives us the opportunity of reflecting on the power of baptism. The vision of the growing river and the fruit it produced in Ezekiel 47:1-9,12 reminds us of the spiritual fruits of baptism. *'Along the river, on either bank, will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fails; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from the sanctuary.'* Having ourselves been blessed by water from sanctuary in our baptisms, let us pray that we can bear good fruit for the Lord.

Today's beautiful Gospel brings us the story of the man by the pool of Bethzatha, John 5:1-6 who wants to get into the pool to seek healing from his thirty-four-year illness, with Jesus immediately healing him, and telling him, *'Now you are well again, be sure not to sin.'* Jesus always links physical and spiritual healing, and here, by the waters, we again have a link with baptism. Our celebrations in Holy Week will show us how we die in baptism to the old person and rise to a new being. The Gospel ends rather chillingly with the words, *'It was because Jesus did things like this on the sabbath that the Jews began to persecute him.'* At Easter Weekend we will have the opportunity to renew our baptismal vows – though there will no sprinkling of water.

*Gracious God,
by water and the Spirit you claimed us as your own,
cleansing us from sin, and giving us new life.
You made us members of your body, the church,
calling us to be your servants in the world.
Renew in each person the covenant you made in their baptism.
Continue the good work you have begun in them.
Send them forth by the power of your Spirit
to love and serve you with lives,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

For our hymn today let us sing 'Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiRV5Z4qFAU>

Last month we celebrated the funeral of Margaret Berry sister of our Choir Mistress, Kath Pickup. Kath has asked me to include on this Message: *'To all the lovely people of St. Bernadette's parish, can I say a big 'Thank You' for all your prayers, cards, flowers and support following the death of my sister Margaret. special thanks to members of choir, Socially distance parish group, prayer group and many more. Special thanks must go to Father Peter who gave Margaret a wonderful service, everyone fell in love with him, commenting 'he is like a breath of fresh air' and how lucky we all are to have him in our Fabulous parish that is St. Bernadette's. God bless you all. Kath Pickup and family. Xx'* The final piece of music at the Crematorium was 'Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye' sung by Our Gracie and as you can see in the attached photo, taken with Kath's permission at the funeral, everybody did indeed wave her goodbye.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EUytEX_XkE

*Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye
Cheerio, here I go, on my way
Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye
Not a tear, but a cheer, make it gay
Give me a smile I can keep all the while
In my heart while I'm away
Till we meet once again, you and I
Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye*

Have a lovely, lucky 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.