

Thursday March 18th, 2021, Thursday 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.

The day started with my bi-weekly covid test, and all is nice and negative!

In Exodus 32:7-14 Moses makes an impassioned plea to God to forgive the sins of the Israelites, 'why should your wrath blaze out against this people of yours'. God hears and responds to Moses plea, '*So the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.*' Sin can always be forgiven when there is repentance.

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father:
We have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
forgive us all our offenses;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.*

Jesus tells his disciples that he does not have to depend on human testimony - John the Baptist first gave his testimony, but now Jesus' own works are his testimony. John 5:31-47 reminds us that the scriptures bear this out; '*You study the scriptures, believing that in them you have eternal life; not these same scriptures to me, and yet you refuse to come to me for life... If you refuse to believe what Moses wrote, how can you believe what I say?*' Sadly the Scribes and Pharisees do not look upon Jesus with eyes of faith. This is St. Paul's prayer for spiritual insight for the people of Ephesus:

*I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.
I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father,
would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.
I pray that the perception of your mind may be enlightened
so you may know what is the hope of His calling,
what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints,
and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe,
according to the working of His vast strength.*

Amen.

Today we remember St. Cyril of Jerusalem, a fourth century Bishop and Doctor of the Church. He was born near Jerusalem, and for many years served as Patriarch. He fostered the development of the holy City of Jerusalem as being a place of pilgrimage for the whole of Christendom. Cyril's primary surviving work is a collection of 23 catechetical lectures ('Catecheses') delivered to candidates for Baptism. The first eighteen, based on the Jerusalem baptismal creed, were given during Lent, and the concluding five instructed the newly baptized during the week after Easter. Cyril was declared a doctor of the church in 1883.

*Father,
through Cyril of Jerusalem
you led your Church to a deeper understanding
of the mysteries of salvation.
Let his prayers help us to know your Son better
and to have eternal life in all its fullness.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Today's picture I took in the Church of the resurrection in Jerusalem. Let us hope that we will all soon be bathed in the light of the resurrection!

Today I have the first of two long zoom meetings regarding safeguarding in the diocese, compulsory for every priest, the second is tomorrow.

Don't forget to book in for the 11:30am mass on easter Sunday morning!

Shalom, my friends!

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.