

Wednesday March 24th, 2021, Wednesday in the Fifth 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.

I've said before, and no doubt I'll say it again, that Lent is not my favourite season of the year, and one of the reasons is that the readings scoot around the Bible will-nilly, often on the same theme, and sometimes almost seemingly repeating themselves. It was only a couple of weeks ago that I wrote about the 'Burning Fiery furnace,' and the three amigos Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego, and here they are popping up again today. In Daniel 3:14-20.91-92.95 as they refused to worship the statue made by Nebuchadnezzar they were thrown into a furnace. They survived and demonstrated the great power of the God they believed in, with Nebuchadnezzar himself exclaiming, *'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego; he has sent his angel to rescue his servants who, putting their trust in him, defied the order of the king, and preferred to forfeit their bodies rather than serve or worship any god but their own.* This is the prayer of Azariah:

You are blest, Lord God of our fathers.

To you glory and praise for evermore.

Blest your glorious holy name.

To you glory and praise for evermore.

You are blest in the temple of your glory.

To you glory and praise for evermore.

You are blest on the new throne of your kingdom.

To you glory and praise for evermore.

You are blest who gaze into the he depths. .

To you glory and praise for evermore.

You are blest in the firmament of heaven.

To you glory and praise for evermore.

Jesus was very maddening for the Pharisees - he is only to be with them for a short time, but through him would flow fountains of living water that would bring redemption and new life. In John 8:31-42 to the Jews who believed in him Jesus said:

'If you make my word you home

You will indeed be my disciples,

You will learn the truth,

And the truth will make you free.'

Let us pray for the truth to know Jesus' word:

*Lord, help me to seek truth today –
To find it in places and people I wouldn't otherwise notice.
Teach me that in truth there is wisdom and understanding.
May seeking truth help me overcome my fears and frustrations.
Lord, help me to cherish truth –
Knowing that You are the author of all that is beautiful, good, and true.
May truth reign in my heart, no matter what I encounter today.
Lord, You created truth. You are Truth.
Help me to know truth when I see it;
Learn truth when I am taught it; Love truth, Live truth.
Through you, the one true god. Amen.*

So did you shine your light of reflection yesterday? I did, as you can see, on All Hallows Road, and it was lovely to have a chat with some of the residents from Denebank opposite, as we always did when we were clapping for the NHS a year ago. And what a year it has been. And yet we are still together, slightly separated, but together.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
when fear and anxiety besiege us
and hope is veiled in grief,
hold us in your wounded hands
and make your face shine on us again,
for you are our Lord and God.
Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us
from the shining light of your love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Let us sing 'Lead, Kindly Light, Amid the Encircling Gloom'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fNjEgbsNmI>

We've just had a meeting in the sacristy to see how we are going to celebrate the Easter Services following the guidelines from the Bishop's conference of England and Wales, and make some preparations as to where things will go, and things like that. Although they will be much simpler, I'm

sure they will still be beautiful. I'm so looking forward to singing the Exultet on Saturday night – it's been two years! There are still places at Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning, and 11:30am Easter Sunday, and all services will be streamed live and available on the YouTube. How can you make Easter preparations go faster? Use the eggs-press lane! I'll get my coat.

Well, on with Wednesday. It's a lovely day, so let's make the most of it. Maybe see you on the Prom?

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.