

Friday March 26th, 2021, Friday 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.

Chucked it down in the night, but dryer now, and I'll be certainly on the prom this afternoon, as I haven't managed many long walks this week.

After the light of the beautiful Feast yesterday, now with Holy Week on the horizon, our readings start to take a darker turn. In Jeremiah 10:10-13 the people want to denounce the prophet. *'All those who used to be my friends watch for my downfall.'* But no matter what happens he has the Lord God on his side, *'Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for he has delivered the souls of the needy from the hands of evil men.'* And of course all of this was to happen to Jesus in Holy Week. This is reflected in the Gospel, John 10:31-42 which begins, *'The Jews fetched stones to stone him.'* Jesus challenges the Pharisees, and encourages them to believe in him or, *'at least believe in the work I do; then you will know for sure that the father is I me and I am in the Father.'* This is prayer for those being attacked and denounced - and we might be able to see it as a metaphor for these covid times:

We thank you for the Power of your Word and your Presence over our lives.

*We thank you that no weapon formed against us will prosper,
or greater are You who is in us, than he who is in the world.*

*We pray that you will cast down every threat and accusation,
every abusive word and cruel attack hurled our way.*

*We praise you that nothing is impossible with you,
that You are loving and gracious, full of mercy and might.*

We trust in you alone, to rise up strong on our behalf.

Thank you that you are our Defender and Strong Tower, our Refuge and our Strength.

*Thank you that you fight for us today,
and in our weakness, you make us strong.*

Through the Powerful Name of Jesus,

Amen.

Let us sing 'Do Not Be Afraid' worrying about nothing, and placing our trust in the Lord.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2rO0LhSWJ0>

And so we come to the end of the week, and I guess the news about lifting lockdown restrictions has not been so good, with all the travel restrictions and so on.

*Lord on this day I am aware of the troubles and darkness in our world.
You are the light that shines in the bleakest times, let your Kingdom be built on earth.
May those who suffer be comforted,
may those who are at war search for peace,
and may those who are in pain find healing. Amen.
May Friday be a thoughtful day when Your Spirit leads my prayer.
I entrust each trouble small and wide, with faith into Your care.
Let Friday always prompt my heart to stand upon the truth.
Darkness has been overcome, the Earth belongs to You. Amen.*

So tomorrow evening we have our first Palm Sunday mass. There is a seating plan, so please go directly to your seat, where there will be a service sheet and a palm. If you would like further palms I will be distributing them at the door of the Church as you leave. As always please adhere to our covid restrictions, wearing masks and social distancing throughout.

And Easter is a time for new life, and there was new life in spades in the reception class yesterday. as all the little chickens hatched! So cute, as I'm sure you'll agree from the picture! Did you hear about the chicken who could only lay eggs in the winter? She was no spring chicken. I'll get my coat.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Lorrain Quirke, whose funeral I will be celebrating at Lytham Park this morning. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Enjoy the end of the week, and let's look forward to our Holy Week celebrations.

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.