

Saturday April 3rd, 2021, Holy Saturday

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.

What another gorgeous morning to wake up to, and after two beautiful services for Good Friday, tonight we celebrate our Easter Vigil, which I'm sure will be as solemn and moving as all our other services, even with all our covid restrictions. I actually preferred the way we did the unveiling and adoration of the cross yesterday – much simpler, but quieter and more moving I thought, not least the way it was accompanied by such beautiful singing. But before we move to our celebration of the Resurrection, let us pause to reflect on this quiet day of Holy Saturday.

My God I love thee - though there were

No heaven for me to win,

No hell to punish those who dare

Against Your love to sin.

Upon the cross, thy wide embrace

Made me, dear Lord, thy own;

The nails, the spear, the long disgrace

For me should all atone.

That night of fear, those hours of pain,

Those bitter griefs of Thine,

That death itself was borne, to gain

A sinner's love - 'twas mine.

And shall the fear of hell below

Or hope of heaven above

Be all the reason heart can know

This loving Lord to love?

That love that asks not anything,

Love like Thy own love free,

Jesus, I give, who art my King,

Who art my God, to Thee.

There are no Scripture readings today, as there is no liturgy, but these are words from an Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday:

'What is happening? Today there is great silence over the earth, a great silence, and stillness, a great silence because the King Sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled.

Truly he goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep; he wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his fellow-prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God and Adam's son.

The Lord goes in to them holding his victorious weapon, his cross. When Adam, the first created man, sees him, he strikes his breast in terror and calls out to all, 'My Lord be with you all.' And Christ in reply says to Adam, 'And with you Spirit.' And grasping his hand He raises him up, saying, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.'

*Almighty, ever-living God,
whose Only-begotten Son descended to the realm of the dead,
and rose from there to glory,
grant that your faithful people,
who were buried with him in baptism,
may, by his resurrection, obtain eternal life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

'Praise To The Holiest In The Height,' would make a very fitting hymn for this quiet day.

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

And so we prepare for our Easter Vigil tonight and our two masses tomorrow morning. Especial thanks to Catherine Stubbs for decorating our Easter Candle for this evening, in stark contrast to the plain candle which marked the year of Covid. It looks beautiful.

And here is a picture of the Good Friday sun setting, taken on the prom, as we await the Son rising at Easter.

Have a beautiful 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.