

Monday April 5th, 2021, Monday in Easter Week

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.

Continued Easter Greetings. And after a wonderful (if somewhat exhausting) Easter Weekend, we now celebrate Easter Week – and every day is Easter Day, as we have a whole Octave to enjoy this beautiful Feast. And we have a whole fifty days of Eastertide to take us to the great Feast of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, on the 23rd of May - hopefully with more lifting of restrictions!

Throughout the whole of our fifty days of Eastertide we will be reading from the Acts of Apostles. It's rare that I suggest reading a book of the Bible from start to finish in one sitting as it were, but the Acts of the Apostles does benefit from this. It's like an adventure novel. When I was asked to do a video talk for Year 6 on the early Church, I described it as a bunch of shipwreck survivors landing on a desert island, having to cope with wild animals and marauders, whilst setting up a new community. You really understand the inspiration for those Biblical Blockbuster films. Today's extract, Acts 2:14.22-32, we have Peter's Pentecost morning sermon, where there is a brand new message: Christ was crucified but is risen. Even the great King David is still in his tomb, but '*Christ... is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to this.*' Let us pray to be good and faithful witnesses:

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank You, and worship You for Your greatest of all gifts, in sending the Lord Jesus to be our Saviour and Friend and for dying in our place on the cross, to pay the price for our sins.

Thank You that when two or three are gathered together in Your name You are there in our midst. And thank You Father, for the many blessings that You shower over each one of us day by day. Give us grateful hearts and a willingness and desire to share with others the grace and mercy that You have showered on us day by day, without measure.

Help us Lord, to demonstrate Your great love and grace to all those that cross our paths today. May we be ready and willing to be faithful witnesses of You and to give an answer for what we believe, so that many may also come to know You and to accept Jesus as their own personal Saviour and friend, because they saw Him in us.

Help us to edify and uplift other members of Your body and in all things to be Your hands and feet, Your eyes and ears and Your heart of love in all we say and do today. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

And our Gospels for this Easter week give us the various resurrection appearances from all four Gospels. Today in Matthew 28:8-15 we have the appearance of Jesus to the women, who are given the honour of being the first to preach the news of the resurrection to the Apostles. We also have the addendum of how the soldiers who were guarding the tomb of Jesus are bribed to lie about what happened.

Dear God,

Thank you that you make all things new.

Thank you for the victory and power that is in your name.

Thank you that you hold the keys over death.

*Thank you that by your might, Jesus was raised from the grave,
paving the way for us to have new life with you.*

Thank you that you had plan, thank you that you made a way.

Thank you for Easter, as we look forward to the eternal Easter.

Amen.

And let's hear a great 'Songs of Praise' 'Thine Be The Glory, Risen Conquering Son.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaoV5w2Qfag> as the flag was flying outside the Church yesterday, as you can see in the attached pic.

Huge thanks again to everyone who helped put together our two Easter Morning Masses; they were both a joy to celebrate and a sure sign of hope for the future. Let's hope this is the last time we will have to 'book in' and have 'seating plans' for our services, however well they worked. We have a our usual public Tuesday and Thursday Masses this week, both at twelve noon.

And I hope you have a beautiful bank holiday, whatever you are doing. I was planning to sit and read all day, but it looks so lovely outside that I'll just have to take a walk on the prom, though I'm told to wrap up as it's pretty chilly. Though what do I listen to as I walk? Given it's Easter Monday perhaps 'Jesus Christ Superstar' might be appropriate, even though it doesn't have a resurrection, although the first production I saw of it at the Liverpool Empire, when I was a student at UpHolland a hundred years ago, actually did have a resurrection, which was really quite moving. Or Godspell, as I continue my journey embracing my inner hippie? If you see me on the prom try and guess which one I'm listening to. If I'm wearing flares it's definitely Godspell. Incidentally, 'Godspell' is an old English word meaning 'Good news', or, yes, 'Gospel'.

Have a steady and solidly, jolly bank holiday. (Anyone get the reference?)

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.