

Tuesday April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Tuesday 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.

Another beautiful morning, but bitterly cold, so wrap up if you're coming to noonday mass, as covid safe we have the windows and doors open!

And so we continue our reading of the events of Pentecost day with Peter getting great results from the hearers of his sermon. In Acts 2:36-41 the people ask Peter what they have to do be saved, to which Peter replies, '*You must repent... and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*' Here's a prayer of Repentance:

*God our heavenly Father, I am sorry for all my sins, and I repent of them all. I give you my life today, and I confess my faith in your Son Jesus Christ that he is Lord. I believe that Jesus died and resurrected to give me eternal life; I confess my faith in him, and I accept him as my personal Lord and Saviour. I promise to faithfully serve Jesus Christ throughout the days of my life. Amen.*

And our Gospel today, John 20:11-18, is the beautiful resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene. It's a wonderful moment. Mary doesn't even recognise Jesus; don't forget Jesus is now in his post-resurrection glory, as witnessed by Peter, James and John at the Transfiguration, and the last time Mary saw Jesus she was laying his broken body in the tomb. It's only when he speaks her name that '*she knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbuni", which means "Master"*'. She is then given the amazing grace to be the first person to preach that Christ is risen as she is charged with telling the Apostles, no doubt a reward for supporting Christ throughout the whole of his Passion.

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
grant that by the mystery of your body and blood  
we may watch at your cross,  
weep at your tomb  
and witness to your resurrection;  
We give you thanks that Mary Magdalene,  
who followed Christ in love,  
who was called by her name by the risen Christ,  
was first to announce to his apostles  
that he had risen from the dead.  
God of life and love,*

*in your mercy, help us to proclaim the good news  
that he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.*

‘Christ The Lord Is risen Today, Alleuia’ is a great song for us as we continue celebrating Easter Sunday: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVIKjE4uIFI>

So, anyone up for a walk on the Prom? But what to listen to? Yesterday, in full hippie mode, I listened to ‘Godspell’, the 1971 Original London Cast recording, which has an incredible cast of then up and coming stars: Julie Covington, Jeremy Irons, Marti Webb and David Essex as Jesus (incidentally, the CD transfer is dreadful, making it sound very ‘boxy’) (and I also took this rather lovely picture of the birds over the sea). As it’s Easter Week I thought I’d continue with the biblical theme, and today I’ll listen to a musical by the same author as ‘Godspell’, Stephen Schwartz, called ‘Children of Eden’ which takes its inspiration from the Book of Genesis, Act One telling the story of Creation, the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and the story of Cain and Abel, Act Two moving on to tell the story of Noah and the flood. As is the way of these things the plots often diverge somewhat from the actually Bible story. All is going well here (although there is a twist that Adam is given the choice whether to stay in the Garden alone or leave with Eve), until we come to Cain and Abel. Cain is presented as an anguished youth who resents his parents for causing the expulsion, *‘Now we’re lost in the wilderness... this is the Wasteland’* he sings (musing on T.S. Eliot, perhaps). In his anger he throws a rock at Adam, but it misses him and kills Cain. Act One ends with the death of Adam, and Eve singing the title song, which always sounds to me as if it is going to turn into ‘Soul of My Saviour.’ To get us from Adam to Noah there is an entr’acte entitled ‘Generations of Adam’ which includes the line *‘Noah, Noah, you-a go-a, all the way back to protozoa.’* (I’m not making this up). The story of Noah is told fairly accurately, except that Noah doesn’t want to let one of his daughters-in-law, Yonah, on to the Ark, as she is descended from Cain and bears the ‘mark of Cain’, a kind of ‘Mallen Streak’ (I’m not making this up, either). She then sings arguably the best song in the show called ‘Stranger to the Rain’ in which she makes poetic reference to the coming of Christ and the crucifixion:

*And somewhere far from safety  
There’s a man who’s walking free.  
His story isn’t mine,  
but he’s as much alone as me.  
He has left his home to walk among the wounded and the slain,  
And when the storm comes crashing on the plain  
He will dance before the lightening  
To music sacred and profane.*

Noah’s Son insists he won’t enter the Ark without her, and Noah relents, singing *‘The hardest part of love is the letting go’* with his son. Everything continues in accordance with the Bible, the musical

ending with 'In the Beginning,' in which the family, now on dry land, hope for a return to Eden. The show played for just four months in London, closing on April 6, 1991 due to poor reviews and the negative effects the Persian Gulf War had on tourism worldwide (well that was their story). Here's a link to 'The Hardest Part of Love' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR8Pf7ZmEdg> And I'll see you on the Prom!

So. One day God calls down to Noah and says, 'Noah, I want you to make me a brand new Ark'. Noah replies, 'Certainly, God. The last one was a huge success.' But God interrupts, 'Ah, but there's a catch. This time Noah, I do not want just a couple of decks, I want 20 decks one on top of the other'. '20 DECKS!', screams Noah, 'Whatever you wish. Should I fill it up with all the animals just like last time?' 'No, this time I want you to fill it up with fish', God answers, 'to be more specific Noah, I want carp, wall to wall, floor to ceiling, carp!' 'Why?' asked the perplexed Noah. 'Dunno', says God, 'I just fancied a Multi-Storey Carp Ark.' I'll get my coat.

Enjoy this sunny, chilly 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.