

Wednesday April 7th, 2021, Wednesday 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 chilly but beautiful day. Bizarre weather yesterday! I got caught in the snow at about three in the afternoon, and then again popping into Church at 5 o'clock!

Today in Acts 3:1-10 we see the immediate effects of the new message of Christ crucified and risen, as Peter and John heal a man who has been crippled since birth at the gate of the Temple. The man begs, not for a miracle, but for some money, to which Peter replies, *'I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!'*, and he does. *'They were all astonished and unable to explain what had happened to him.'*

Today we have my favourite of all the resurrection stories, the two disciples who unknowingly meet the risen Jesus on their way to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35. Despite Jesus talking to them for hours, like Mary Magdalene yesterday, they don't recognise Jesus at all, until they witness him breaking bread, just as he had done so at the Last Supper. Jesus explained to them all the Law and the Prophets and how the Messiah had to suffer and so enter into glory. How amazing to have the Scriptures explained to you by Jesus himself – as the two disciples themselves say; *'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'*

O God of all the prophets,

Lord of life, we thank you for Jesus the Nazarene.

In him you fulfilled your promise of old that your Christ would suffer and so rise in glory.

*Through him you have worked mighty deeds, wonders and signs,
and have exalted him to your right hand.*

*Stir up our faith, that our hearts may burn within us at the sound of his word,
and our eyes be opened to recognize him in the breaking of the bread.*

Grant this through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

And let's continue our joyful Easter singing with 'This Joyful Eastertide'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7TFuqp97cs>

Things had not turned out as expected for the two disciples, but the following prayer suggests that this is often no bad thing;

*I asked God for health, that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for strength, that I might achieve;
I was made weak, that I might learn to obey.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy;
I was given poverty, that I might be wise
I asked for power, that I might have praise of men;
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;
I was given real life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing I asked for, but everything I hope for;
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am, among, all people, most richly blessed.*

Many thanks for the huge donation which was left in my letter box for anyone in need, and also the gin and tonic kit which was left on my doorstep - from an anonymous donor. Thank you and many blessings.

Anyone up for a walk on the Prom? But what to listen to? Keeping up with the Bible Musical theme today I'm plumping for 'King David' by the great David Menken (who wrote 'Beauty and the Beast etc.) with lyrics by our own Tim Rice. The work was originally being written to commemorate the 3000th anniversary of the city of Jerusalem, but when this wasn't possible Disney got involved (Menken being their in-house composer at the time). Nine concert performances in 1997 of what is essentially an oratorio opened Disney's newly owned and refurbished New Amsterdam theatre on Forty-Second Street just off Times Square in New York (which has ever since hosted 'The Lion King'). The plot is more biblically accurate than most of these creations. It recounts the pivotal moments of David's life as found in the scriptures: His days as a humble yet courageous shepherd boy who slays the giant Goliath; David's surge in popularity, rivalry with Saul, and friendship with Jonathan; David's marriage to Michal and rise to the throne of Israel; his affair with Bathsheba; the rebellion of David's beloved son Absalom; and finally David's succession by his son Solomon. As a whole it's a vivid and lovely portrayal of God's love and plan of forgiveness, demonstrating how God's grace is able to save us even when we fail. It actually quotes the Bible directly, I Samuel 18:7, in the song 'Thousands' which focuses on Saul's jealousy of David's popularity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBPTbXbATzQ> The reviews weren't great, mainly because it was nearly three hours long, with one reviewer calling it a 'Goliath of a yawn'. To my knowledge it hasn't been performed in England at all. Yet. This is the song 'Never Again' sung by David's wife

Michal when he returns to her after his affair: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2PysRHg9y0> See you on the Prom!

I attach another photo from Saturday night, evidently just before the lights were switched on, with ,e dramatically surrounded by candle lights, like the Phantom of the Opera!

Enjoy this Fourth day in the Octave of Easter.

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.