

Thursday April 8th, 2021, Thursday 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.

And I think it's a lovely day, but I haven't actually looked out yet. Early message as I'm off for Spiritual Direction this morning, but I'll be back for Noonday Mass.

In Acts 3:11-26, Peter uses the miracle of the infirm man from yesterday as an opportunity to preach about the crucified Christ who fulfilled the prophecies of the scriptures - which coincides with what Jesus tells the Apostles in today's Gospel. *'It was for you in the first place that God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.'*

*Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the Lord's resurrection,
may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.*

Our Gospel today follows directly on from yesterday, with the two Emmaus disciples running right back (seven miles) to Jerusalem to tell the Apostles their news, and finally Jesus appears to them all in Luke 24:35-48. At first they believe him to be a ghost, but to prove the nature of his *bodily* resurrection he asks for something to eat *'And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes.'* As with the Emmaus disciples he then goes on to talk to them about the Scriptures, showing himself once again to be in line with all of the Old Testament, as well as how he had to suffer and die, and that *'repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.'* As, indeed, the Apostles were.

*Draw us forth, God of all creation.
Draw us forward and away from limited certainty
into the immense world of your love.
Give us the capacity to even for a moment
taste the richness of the feast you give us.
Give us the peace to live with uncertainty,*

with questions, with doubts.

Help us to experience the resurrection anew

with open wonder and an increasing ability

to see you in the people of Easter that you created anew.

Through your risen Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.

How about 'At The Lamb's High Feast we Sing' in this somewhat rather plummy version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y8i9UxNvzM>

Well, if I'm keeping on the Biblical theme for my Prom listening, it's time we turned to 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,' which I'm guessing just about everyone has either seen or been in themselves – I've played keyboard for three productions over the years in various schools I've been involved with, and a group of us saw it a couple of years ago at the Opera House which one of our parishioners in the children's choir. It didn't start as such a big show though – it was originally just a 15-minute 'pop cantata' performed at Colet Court School in London in 1968, with Lloyd Webber's Dad, William, who was also a composer, playing the organ, and just got expanded and expanded into the stage show we have now after the success of 'Jesus Christ Superstar.' Although it's told in a fun way with various pastiches of song and lots of anachronisms, it's actually a very faithful retelling of the story from Genesis, for example, after Joseph explains Pharaoh's dreams we are told '*Joseph got a royal pardon and a host of splendid things; a chariot of gold, a cloak, a medal and some signet rings,*' and if you turn to Genesis 41:42-43 you'll find that is indeed exactly what Joseph was given. There was a bit of a hoo-ha in New Zealand a couple of years ago when a huge production with all the Schools in Wellington involved, changed the words in the song 'Close Ev'ry Door' from 'Children of Israel are never alone... for we have bene promised a land of own,' to 'children of *kindness*' to supposedly de-politicize it, when it had never been political at all. I'm going to listen to the 1982 Broadway cast because of all the recordings I've got (only six, actually) this one has the greatest of all narrators, the late actress Laurie Beechman. Her great career was sadly cut short by ovarian cancer. Although her treatments were ongoing, she continued performing until just a few months before her death on March 8, 1998, at age 44. Not long before she died, whilst she was undergoing treatment, she recorded an album called 'No One is Alone: Songs of Hope and Inspiration' including the Jacques Brel Song 'If We Only Have Love' on which she duets with her sister. Knowing she died not long afterwards makes the beautiful rendition even more moving.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8Nhyt6v8Tc>

Where is the first tennis match mentioned in the Bible? When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court. I'll get my coat. Which isn't technicoloured.

So maybe I'll see you on the prom! Go go go Joseph...! No doubt a certain presbytery cat will be waiting for his treats when I get back...

Have a great 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.