

Saturday April 10th, 2021, Saturday 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.

Let us begin by praying for the response of the soul of the Duke of Edinburgh. Cardinal Vin Nicholls wrote, *'At this moment of sadness and loss I pray for the repose of the soul of Prince Philip, Her Majesty the Queen's faithful and loyal husband. I pray for the Queen and all of the Royal Family. How much we will miss Prince Philip's presence and character, so full of life and vigour. He has been an example of steadfast loyalty and duty cheerfully given. May he rest in peace.'* Amen.

Following their arrest and subsequent preaching to the High Priests yesterday, we see in Acts 4:13-21 the Rulers, Elders and Scribes being *'astonished at the assurance shown by Peter and John, considering they were uneducated laymen.'* They are worried about everyone in Jerusalem being impressed with them, especially with their miraculous powers as well, so they tell them they must stop their preaching, to which Peter replies, *'We cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard,'* and the Court only repeats their warnings and sets them free, too scared to punish them.

Today we turn to the Gospel of St. Mark 16:9-15 for our final resurrection story – typically with Mark it is very brief, and really a quick summary of the other Gospels we have heard this week; an appearance to Mary Magdalene, who goes to tell the Apostles who don't believe her; an appearance to *'two of them as they were on their way into the country'*, presumably the two disciples on their way to Emmaus; and finally an appearance to the faithful eleven where he instructs them to, *'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation.'*

*Dear God, please release your Holy Spirit upon me
so that I can be effective in preaching the gospel,
and let him empower me to do exploits for his kingdom.
Let him also guide me to remain fit for your heavenly kingdom.
For in the name of Jesus Christ I pray.
Do not let me be an obstacle to gospel evangelization,
but help me to support it to spread further.
I also pray for your ministers that spread your gospel throughout the world,
please anoint and empower them unto success.
Give them grace to irresistibly share your good news*

and lead people to your kingdom through them.

Amen.

Let's continue our Easter Hymn Sing with 'Now The Green Blade Riseth' or 'rises' in this version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-5Bi2jM40E>

Lord, how can we ever thank You enough?

*You endured more pain, more shame, more sorrow, more grief
than we can possibly fathom.*

Help us remember why You gave Your life.

Because of love.

Because of mercy.

Because we desperately need them both.

Through you, the Risen Christ. Amen.

You may remember in Autumn my brother telling you all about the autumn festival where people visit the grave, a bit like our feast of the holy Souls in November. Well last weekend it was the Spring equivalent. My brother writes, 'Ching Ming 清明节 is one of two days a year when we visit the graves of our ancestors and is a public holiday in Hong Kong. It is not a mournful time, but one of reverence combined with happiness and includes the offerings of paper presents and money (pink bag in the photographs) that are burned, along with incense and food and drink. Family news and gossip is passed on and families pay their respects as a group, making a day out of a trip to the countryside and the mountains. The location of the grave in the landscape determines how good the feng shui (風水) of a site is so grave sites overlook water and are usually high up on hillsides. This is the first time that we have been able to go tomb sweeping since Covid and we are still not able to visit the Buddhist convent at the foot of the hill as we normally do. We had to hike up and over the hillside and managed to get there early to avoid the crowds.' And here's my brother, sister-in-law and niece doing just that in the attached photos.

For all the faithful who have died we pray,

but in particular for those dear to us,

parents, relatives and friends.

nor do we forget all who did good to us while on earth,

who helped us by their prayers, sacrifice and example.

May the merits and prayers of our Virgin Mother, Mary,

and those of all the Angels and Saints,

speak for us and assist them now.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I hope you are having a great weekend, and look forward to seeing many of you at one of our public masses over the weekend. And don't forget that Saturday's and Sunday's mass are live streamed and available on the YouTube site all week.

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.