

Sunday April 11th, 2021, The Second Sunday of Easter

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.

Well, I have to say. I think Easter was wonderful. The services were beautiful. The singing was wonderful. The weather was tremendous. And almost two hundred people came here to celebrate together that Jesus rose from the dead, as well as a good number watching online.

That's a wonderful thing to be able to say, but it's wrong on at least three accounts. No, I don't mean that the whole of our Easter services were dreadful and that nobody turned up. No, what I'm questioning is the statement that Easter *was* wonderful. Because to say that Easter *was* wonderful, using the past tense, is wrong, wrong on three accounts.

Firstly, we are still within the octave of Easter, which means that this Sunday we are still celebrating Easter Day, and in the preface to the Eucharistic prayer this morning you will hear me refer to refer to the joy of this Easter day. So it is wrong to say Easter was wonderful: it is still Easter, and it is still wonderful.

Secondly, Easter doesn't last one day nor just the eight days of the Easter octave. We have fifty glorious days of Eastertide to take us right up to Pentecost, the fiftieth day, and our celebrations of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and beyond. Remember: Christ has died, Christ is, **is** risen.

Thirdly, to speak of Easter only in the past tense, does not take into account the teaching and encouragement of the risen Jesus. For the first words of the risen Jesus to the disciples which we hear in the Gospel from St. John today, do not speak of the past, but only of a wonderful present, and a great and glorious future.

If this Easter has meant, or rather is meaning anything to us, then it should fill us with the peace and the joy which the disciples experienced on that first Easter day. But we should also be filled with the spirit of mission, that all Jesus did for us will not remain in the past, nor be just remembered celebrations one day, eight days, or fifty days of the year, but will be present and active within us, today in the present, and for the whole of the glorious future promised to us by Jesus.

Good and gracious God,

Our most glorious Creator,

As we greet the signs in nature around us:

Of Spring once again regaling us in bloom,

*In the songs of returning birds and fields soon to be planted,
We give you praise for an even greater sign of new life:
the resurrection of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ,
that we especially celebrate in these fifty days of Eastertide.
The sadness and despair of his death has given way to the bright promise of immortality.
For the Resurrection is our guarantee that justice will triumph over treason,
Light will overcome darkness, and love will conquer death.
As we celebrate, we also dare to ask for your grace that we may live the promise given to us,
By imitating the life of Jesus in reaching out to the poor, the marginalized,
the least among us,
As we strive to be neighbour to all those we meet,
We praise you for this joyful Easter season.
Change our lives, change our hearts to be messengers of Easter joy and hope.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord forever.
Amen.*

Today's Gospel, John 20:19-31 as well as taking us onward to look forward to Pentecost, also recounts the story of 'doubting' Thomas, and his great profession of faith 'My Lord, and my God.' Eileen has helpfully provided us with a knitted version of the scene. When he does eventually see Jesus. Jesus tells him, 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' And that means me and you, a great cause for happiness indeed.

*Father,
Please help me to rest in your happiness,
To allow a smile to linger on my lips,
To dwell within a wonderful memory,
To walk back through sunlit places.
Please help me to sing with faith,
To carry the truth close in my heart always,
Please help me not to miss
A single drop of heaven,
To catch each moment
And drink in the great happiness of a life of faith in you.
Amen.*

So how about singing a very happy version of 'Lord of the Dance' today, beginning with a chirpy verse of whistling! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkk0YodJqH8>

Today is also Divine Mercy Sunday:

*Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless
and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible,
look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us,
that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent,
but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will,
which is Love and Mercy itself.
Amen.*

The Divine Mercy service this afternoon is being streamed from Walsingham, so if you do some Google searching, you may be able to find it.

Can everyone please note that there is **NO MASS THIS THURSDAY NOON** due to interviews for a school post taking place, with which I am involved.

Why not sit down and try this Easter Food Quiz. It was actually written for children, but I've learnt a couple of things! Every day's a school day!

1. On average, how many Easter Eggs do children receive each year? a) 8 b) 12 c) 4 d) 1
2. Why are there 11 balls of marzipan on a traditional simnel cake? a) They represent a baker's dozen b) They represent the apostles (minus Judas) c) Good Friday originally fell on 11th March d) Easter lunches were originally for 10 people and the 11th slice is considered to be a holy offering
3. Which of these ingredients is not traditionally in hot cross buns? a) Ginger b) Saffron c) Coriander d) Nutmeg
4. The Easter bunny was originally depicted as a hare, but from which European country does he originate?
a) Germany b) Denmark c) Italy d) Wales
5. What does the rabbit in Alice In Wonderland always carry with him? a) An Easter egg b) A pocket watch c) An umbrella d) A mobile phone
6. Who presents Junior Bake Off? a) Harry Hill b) David Walliams c) Ant and Dec d) Little Mix
7. How long does it take for an egg to fully form before it is laid? a) Three hours b) 12 hours c) 26 hours d) A week and a half
8. The world's largest chocolate Easter egg was created by an Italian chocolatier. It was 10.39 metres tall. How much did it weigh? a) Around the weight of a giraffe b) Around the same weight as a car c) Around the weight of a large African elephant d) Around the weight of a double decker bus
9. Which Disney film does the rabbit Thumper appear in? a) Bambi b) Beauty and the Beast c) Dumbo d) Cinderella

10. Some countries have a different animal delivering eggs instead of the Easter bunny. What bird delivers eggs in Switzerland? a) Penguin b) Ostrich c) Cuckoo d) Puffin
11. England and Wales traditionally have a day off on Easter Monday. What do we call this? a) Happy Monday b) Bank Holiday c) Fun Day d) National Lie-in Day
12. What happens to the clocks in spring? a) They go forward b) They go back c) They all Stop d) They're all replaced with the sound of dogs barking
13. What part of the cocoa plant is chocolate made from? a) Beans b) Leaves c) Berries d) Flowers
14. Why do many Easter eggs have a crocodile or fish scale design on them? a) To represent the fish eaten on Good Friday b) To cover up any imperfections in the chocolate c) Just to look pretty d) The design is inspired by a valuable Fabergé egg
15. Eggs have been the symbol of life for centuries. The act of giving eggs as gifts dates back to which civilisation? a) Romans b) Egyptians c) Persians d) All of the above
16. Egg rolling – an Easter game of rolling decorated hard-boiled eggs down a hill – has been a tradition across Europe for centuries. It's now an annual event at which famous landmark? a) The Leaning Tower of Pisa b) The Eiffel Tower c) The White House d) Buckingham Palace
17. What meat is traditionally eaten on Easter Sunday? a) Chicken b) Beef c) Pork d) Lamb
18. Who wrote The Tale of Peter Rabbit? a) Beatrix Potter b) JK Rowling c) Jacqueline Wilson d) Roald Dahl
19. How many Creme Eggs do Cadbury make each day? a) 100,000 b) 500,000 c) 1 million d) 1.5 million
20. Darius, a Flemish Giant Rabbit who lives in the Midlands, is the world's largest bunny rabbit. How big is he? a) 60 centimetres b) A little over 1 metre c) 5 metres d) 25 metres

The answers are at the end of the Message. Happy quizzing, and a very happy Easter once again!

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.

Answers: 1.a) 8 2.b) They represent the apostles (minus Judas) 3. c) Coriander 4. a) Germany 5. b) A pocket watch 6. a) Harry Hill 7. c) 26 hours 8. c) Around the weight of a large African elephant 9. a) Bambi 10. c) Cuckoo 11. b) Bank Holiday 12. a) They go forward 13. a) Beans 14. b) To cover up any imperfections in the chocolate 15. d) All of the above 16. c) The White House 17. d) Lamb 18. a) Beatrix Potter 19. d) 1.5 million 20. b) A little over 1 metre