

Monday April 19th, 2021, Monday in the Third Week 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 had a lovely walk yesterday, down Devonshire Road to Cleveleys, then back to the Redbank Road walking on the prom. Chilly, but rather lovely.

Today in Acts 6:8-15 of the Apostles we hear the first part of the deacon Stephen's story, which is accompanied by signs and miracles. People even debate with him but *'they found they could not get the better of his become of his wisdom, and because it was the Spirit that prompted what he said.'* Despite the fact that many false accusations are made against him when the members of the Sanhedrin look at him *'his face appeared to them like the face of an angel.'* When Stephen stood before his accusers, glowing with the face of an angel, he was radiating God's wisdom and heaven's glory. Without speaking a word, Stephen's countenance gave witness that he was the Lord's faithful servant. Indeed, those Sanhedrin members ought to have remembered Moses' face which always shone after his encounters with God. It was as if God was saying, 'This man is no blasphemer! He is like Moses, My loyal servant!' The implication of Stephen's having the face of an angel is that he, like Moses and Jesus, was a witness to and a reflection of the glory of God's presence, with God's face shining upon him. From the Book of Numbers:

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you,

And be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace.

After the miracle of the loaves and fishes the people ran all over the place looking for Jesus, but they were simply looking for more miracles and signs, whereas Jesus wants the people to understand the spiritual significance of the miracle, *'Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for the food that endures to eternal life.'* When the people ask what sort of work he means his reply is simple, *'you must believe in the One he has sent.'* Let's pray the Act of Faith:

O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God, in three Divine Persons,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost;

I believe that Thy Divine Son became man and died for our sins

and that He will come to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches,
because Thou hast revealed them, Who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.
Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

For a hymn today how about 'In Bread We Bring You Lord.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTXPV0UFtTg>

Today is the anniversary of the Election of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Let's say a prayer for him:

*Look with kindness and blessing
upon Benedict, our Holy Father Emeritus,
who has led our Church and who is now happily retired.
Allow him the time to survey all that he accomplished
and give him the satisfaction and fulfilment for all his labours,
as you did on the seventh day, when you rested and saw that all you had made was good.
Give him peace and help him in this period of a peace and rest.
Reassure him of your love and open new ways for him
to share his gifts for the benefit of others.
We praise you, God of love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Slightly later Message today, as this morning after Mass I celebrated the Baptism of Viktoria Ruocco. The baptism not only took place within our covid restrictions, but I also conducted the ceremony in Italian, which, believe me, was quite a challenge. Here we are celebrating our new member of the Church.

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.