

Tuesday April 20th, 2021, Tuesday 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.

We conclude Stephen's story today in Acts 7:51-8:1. He really does take the elders and the scribes head on: *'You stubborn people with your pagan hearts and pagan ears... Can you name a single prophet your ancestors did not persecute?'* As you would imagine this absolutely infuriates them. Stephen, in his final moments, has a vision of heaven being thrown open, and as the crowd begins to stone him he merely prays, *'Lord Jesus receive my Spirit'* and utters words of forgiveness to his murderers. This are the beautiful words of another martyr to the one killing him;

And you, my last-minute friend,

Who will not have known what you were doing.

Yes, I want this thank you and this A-Dieu to be for you, too,

Because in God's face I see yours.

May we meet again in paradise, if it please God, the Father of us both.

The people are still wanting a sign from Jesus, and make mention that their ancestors were given manna in the desert by Moses, to which Jesus retorts that it was not Moses who provided the bread from heaven, but God the Father. When they ask for the bread from heaven which gives life to the world Jesus really starts his Eucharistic Theology saying: *'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; He who believe in me will never thirst.'* Let us pray the Eucharistic Act of Faith:

I believe in God the Father Almighty.

I believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ.

I believe in God the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Trinity.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Body of Christ, the Consecrated Bread.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blood of Christ, the Consecrated Wine.

*I believe that Jesus instituted the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church
as His dwelling Home on earth.*

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacred Tabernacles of the Catholic Church.

I believe that Jesus is truly present physically among us,

over and above being spiritually present within us.

May this truth be known to all for the glory of God.

Amen.

And what else could we sing today other than 'I Am the Bread of Life'?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CRMbh8ViUI>

Last Thursday it was the anniversary of the sinking of Titanic, and I was sent an interesting article about the Catholic Chaplain on the ill-fated trip, Father Thomas B. Byles. One surviving eyewitness wrote, *'Twice, he was offered a seat on a lifeboat and he refused. People gathered around him and he blessed them and gave general absolution. He went into third class, where the servants and working-class people were staying. Many were Catholic. He heard confessions and offered blessings. He led those on board in reciting the rosary. People on the lifeboats later said they could hear his voice calling out the prayers, and people of every language answering back. Loudest of all, they could hear the desperate pleas: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now and the hour of our death, Amen."'* Apparently he refused a place on a lifeboat to stay and pray with people. Beginning from his former Parish in Ongar, Essex, there is now a cause for his beatification.

*God our father, protector of those in peril,
You called you priest father Thomas Byles to provide spiritual lifeboats
for the souls of those in need, by his pastoral care.
Through the example of his life and virtue
may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ more closely.
Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence
in your mercy and love for us.
We humbly ask that you glorify your servant father Thomas Byles on earth
according to the design of your holy will.*

And we can't possibly mention Titanic without a link to Celine Dion and 'My Heart Will Go On.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNIPqafd4As>

Well, we are getting through April at an alarming rate, but it does look as if summer is on its way. Bear in mind that over in Australia they are running through Autumn into Winter, so my niece is giving a demonstration in how to keep warm – cover yourself in cats!

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.