

Monday May 3rd, 2021, the Feast of saints Philip and James

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.

Good Morning, and a very happy Bank Holiday to you all. The forecast has gone from 'Strong winds and heavy rain' to 'light rain showers and a moderate breeze,' so not so bad as expected!

There's a lot going on in our weekday readings this week, and we have a couple of Feasts to throw in as well, so lets crack on.

If we were following the weekday readings today, we would see in Acts 15:5-18, Paul and Barnabas moving to Iconium and Lyconia where they cured a cripple, leading people to think they were gods, with Paul using the opportunity to try to get them to turn from their many pagan gods to the one living God. In the Gospel, John 14:21-26, Jesus reminds us that keeping his commandments are our watchwords for loving him and thus being loved by the Father. In order to help us he promises to send us the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to teach us all things. Pentecost is drawing near...

But today we celebrate the Feast of the Apostles Philip and James.

Philip introduced Bartholomew to Jesus. He seems to have been an amiable type of character who did not make decisions quickly, but had a good sense of humour, with Jesus actually playing a trick on Philip. At the feeding of the five thousand Jesus knew he was going to perform a miracle, but firstly he knew he could have a joke with Philip, asking, *'Where can you go to buy enough bread to feed these people,'* with Philip retorting, *'It would take have a year's wages to buy enough food for this lot.'* He was also there when Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding at Cana. It is said that he preached the Gospel in Greece, and eventually in Turkey, where he was crucified, like St. Peter upside down in about 80AD. The name Philip means 'someone who likes horses'.

James the Lesser is sometimes thought to have been a cousin of Jesus, and often when he is mentioned in the Bible we have references to his Mother, Mary of Clopas, as well as his brother Alphaeus. After the resurrection he became the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and was present at the Council of Jerusalem, where they decided that Gentiles who wished to become Christians did not have to become Jews as well (which we'll here about this week in the day-to-day scriptures). He

earned the nickname 'James the Just' because he was so kind and fair with everyone. He too was martyred, possibly stoned and clubbed to death.

In our two readings for the day firstly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Paul speaks of the resurrection of the dead. This is possible because Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised to life. Paul makes mention that, *'then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles.'* And in John 14:6-14 Jesus uses Philip's question, *'Let us see the Father, and then we shall be satisfied?'* to show that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. *'You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me... I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself.'*

*Almighty Father,
whom truly to know is eternal life:
teach us to know your Son Jesus Christ
as the way, the truth and the life;
that we may follow the steps
of your holy apostles Philip and James,
and walk steadfastly in the way that leads to your glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

'All My Hope On God Is Founded,' is an appropriate hymn for today or any day for that matter!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew>

It's interesting that the Gospel writers go out of their way to talk about James the Lesser's relatives. This is important. It reminds us that the twelve Apostles just didn't appear from nowhere, they were brought up with parents, brothers and sisters. And their parents would have been the first people to teach them their prayers, and all about the passages of the Bible which talk about Jesus coming to save us, and that meant, when Jesus did come, they knew about him, and knew that he was special, and even though they didn't fully understand, they immediately wanted to follow him. Over the past couple of weeks, the children's morning prayer videos were about each of the apostles, and when it came to St. James the Lesser, the prayer was as follows:

*Dear St. James the Lesser,
Because your parents had taught you and your brothers and sisters their prayers and all about the Bible, you recognized Jesus as the Christ when he came and immediately followed him.
We want to say thank you to our Parents, Caregivers, Teachers, and Priests for being the first teachers of each of us about Jesus, prayers and Holy Mass.*

They teach us the Our Father and the Hail Mary.

They teach us amazing stories from the Bible, and all about the life of Jesus.

They teach us all about Mass and how Jesus really is our Holy Communion.

And they teach us about you and all the other Apostles.

Help us to listen to their wise words, so that we can get to know Jesus better, and really speak and act as brothers and sisters of Jesus, just as you did.

And we make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And as we move through Spring into Summer, over in Australia they are moving through Autumn into Winter. My sister writes: *'From May 1st we are allowed to burn garden debris (before this we are prevented due to forest fires). We got onto it today so that we could store up wood for the Winter. We collected the wood and put it in the shelter (action shot showing the benefits of having a daughter who is a gym-bunny). We also inadvertently picked up a hefty lizard which, as they do when they are threatened, ran away and shed its tail, which was left wriggling in the back of the truck (they do it so that predators will take that and they just grow a new one). This was utterly disgusting, and I did NOT photograph it.'* Amen to that. Let's hope they can join us for our winter here this Christmas in England, cancelled due to COVID last year!

Whatever you are getting up to this Bank Holiday, make it the best day you can.

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.