

Thursday May 6th, 2021, Thursday in the Fifth Week of Eastertide

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.

And it looks another lovely morning, if jolly chilly. We were open here very early this morning - 6am - as the parish hall is being used as a voting station for the Police and Crimes Commission voting today, so don't forget to drop in and vote. We'll be open till 10pm! Mass is at noon as usual.

At the Council of Jerusalem, in Acts 15:7-21, the issue about pagans having to follow Jewish initiation rites before becoming Christians is discussed and concluded. Peter reminds the disciples that God gave the Holy Spirit to many of the pagans, '*God made no distinction between them and us since he purified their hearts by faith.*' James quoted a scripture passage which promised salvation to the pagans as well as the Jews. So they decided not to make it difficult for the pagans, they would not have to become Jews, but, as a compromise, they must abstain from '*anything polluted by idols, from fornication, and from the meat of strangled animals.*' And thus we have the decision, and the conclusion, of the very first Church Council. I wonder if the Council prayed something like this prayer before they began their deliberations?

God of being

Be present in our gathering

God of becoming

Help us to become more fully ourselves

God of learning

Light our passion to know more

God of seeking

Be in our own search for understanding

God of teaching

Show us how to teach one another

God of story

Weave together our own stories with yours

God of decision

Bless our deliberations, and may your will be done.

Amen.

In today's extract from the Last Supper discourse, John 15:9-11, Jesus reminds the Apostles that in keeping the commandments, they will remain in the love of the Lord, and thus in the love of the Father as well. And why does Jesus relate this to the disciples the night before he is to die? 'So that my own joy may be in you, and your joy be complete.' Let us pray the joyful Psalm 16:

*I have set the Lord always before me;
because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.
You make known to me the path of life;
in Your presence there is fullness of joy;
at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

So how about 'Give Me Joy in My Heart Keep Me Praising'?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=030Yq4bSRkM>

After asking about information about the Old Bispham Lodge Holiday Camp and where it actually was, I received a postcard (well, a picture of a postcard), along with the following information: 'A very brief history: In 1836 the Lodge was bought by Frederick Kemp. He was the estate manager for Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood, who brought the first railway to the area and was the founder of Fleetwood. Kemp was also involved in the building of the new town and also concerned in other undertakings, such as the Fylde Water Works and the North Lancs. Steam Navigation Co. There is now a street named after him in Fleetwood. In 1899 the Lodge became a private school for boys. In 1907 it became the home of the Blackpool Y.M.C.A. Holiday Home and Camp Co. The Lodge school then became accommodation for 50 men with provision for 500 campers on the field to the west of the building. During the 2nd World war Nissen huts could be found on the campsite and army vehicles were stored in its outbuildings. In 1945 the Lodge buildings were made into holiday flats, and in 1954 the caravans were removed.' Huge thanks to Paul for the information and for the great postcard. How about some pictures and information about Bispham Village and the changing face of the Village and Redbank Road?

Whatever you are doing today, I hope you have the best of days, as we edge ever more nearer to coming out of lockdown.

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.