Saturday May 8th, 2021, Saturday 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.

I had a lovely socially distanced walk on the Prom yesterday with my mate Chris, all the way down to North Pier – a beautiful day. Sadly we can’t say the same for today, but hey ho!

In Acts 16:1-10 Paul sets out on his second missionary journey, where in Lystra, he meets a disciple called Timothy, who is spoken well of, and is recruited to join him, going over to new territory, Macedonia. In each place they visit they deliver the instructions of the Church as recorded at the Council of Jerusalem, *‘So the Churches grew strong in faith, as well as growing daily in numbers.’* By the example of the Early Christian Church, may we see growth in our communities as we slowly come out of lockdown:

 *Lord, by once again coming together in prayer,*

*literally devoting ourselves to be in Your presence on a daily, and throughout the day, basis, we can know Your heart and Your will for our Church and community.*

*May we be ever mindful of the power of prayer, knowing without it, we are sounding gongs. The early church devoted themselves to prayer,*

*they committed, they sacrificed other things to pray without ceasing.*

*Prick our hearts, draw us to prayer, compel us with the urgency of the hour.*

*Help us to draw on what we know to be true and what we have seen You do in the past*

*and believe for greater things as we once more*

*grow the our Parish, the Universal Church and your Kingdom.*

*In Your Mighty Name, Christ our Lord, Amen!*

The very day before his own crucifixion. Jesus tells his disciples that they will suffer because they are his friends. The Apostles, in following Christ, are no longer followers of the world’s ways, and because of this the world will hate and persecute them. In John 15:18-21, Jesus gives some explanation as to why people will persecute them; *‘It will be on my account that they will do this, because they do not know the one who sent me.’*

 *God, who is more than we can ever comprehend,*

*help us to seek you, and you alone.*

*Help us to stand before all that we could do*

*and seek what you would do, and do that.*

*Let us not follow the ways of the world,*

*But the way that leads to you, and you alone.*

*Lift from us our need to achieve all that we can be*

*and instead, surrender to what you can be in us.*

*Give us peace of mind, and direction of heart,*

*And may our eyes be fixed firmly on your kingdom.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

So let our eyes be firmly fixed on the Kingdom of Heaven as we joyfully sing ‘The Beatitudes.’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGNtmlbp3ZE>

Perhaps a sure sign that we are slowly coming out of lockdown is that so much of the news is focused on holidays, when people can get away, where they can get away to, what precautions etc. will be in place. This is an adapted prayer as we slowly ease ourselves into the new normality that has slowly been encroaching upon us throughout Eastertide:

 *Holy and lifegiving God*

*We come before you today with hearts full of gratitude, as we long for brighter days to come.*

*This year has tested us in every possible way. We have looked to you, dear Lord, for guidance, strength, hope, and grace as we have worked to protect those around us.*

 *God, as ever, we commend to you all of those who have died, those who mourn, and those still suffering from the effects of this terrible disease. We lift up to you all who are struggling with the many losses this year has contained.*

 *But God, we are an Easter people – we know that this is not the end of the story. We have watched all of the signs pointing us towards Resurrection*

*We thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus, who fully understood this mortal experience and through whose death and resurrection we find the path to new life in you.*

 *Send us strength for the days to come, vision to see the light on the horizon, and love to continue sharing with all whom we encounter.*

 *We pray all of this in your Triune Name.*

 *Amen.*

And we are still on the subject of birthday cake here, as this week my sister-in-law in Hong Kong celebrated her birthday – with a particularly luscious looking chocolate cake! Happy Birthday Liza!

I hope you are having a great weekend, and look forward to seeing many of you at one of our Masses throughout the week. As usually we are streaming at 5pm tonight and 10am tomorrow, and Prayer and Exposition resumes tomorrow 12noon-1pm, and I will be in the sacristy throughout should anyone want the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Keep smiling – though the rain!

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.