Sunday May 9th, 2021, The Sixth Sunday 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.

Welcome to the sixth Sunday of Eastertide – only a couple of weeks till our great celebrations of the Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Well, in John 15:9-17, in what are virtually Jesus’ final words to his Apostles before his crucifixion, Jesus could not be more direct about the message that he wants the apostles to preach. He could not be more honest in his description of the way he wants us to live our lives. He could not be more open about the love and the friendship, and the great honour and gift, which he has given to the Apostles. He could not put it more simply. What he commands us is to love one another. This simple commandment to love one another is ultimately a summary of not only the whole message of Jesus, but also his life. From before creation he experienced the love of God the Father, and upon becoming flesh on this earth sought to demonstrate that love to us. And this he did in the preaching he shared with us; this he did, vividly and brutally, in his passion and cross, laying down his life for his friends; and this he did in choosing others to continue his mission after his ascension, commissioning others to bear his word and share the Spirit of God to all peoples.

If we, then, are the people whom God has chosen to call his friends, to whom he has given the consolation of his truth, then it goes almost without saying that this command of Jesus to love one another has to be the ground rule of our existence. We cannot love God without loving our neighbour, and having experienced the love of God in such ways as Jesus describes, how can we think of doing anything but loving one another? Sadly, of course, we know the reality is not as simple as that. But with such a direct message given to us, surely we can never say we didn’t know the truth.

In this sense it is also worth taking into account the two demonstrations of love for one another which Jesus gives in this Gospel, that is laying down our lives for our friends, and sharing that message with others, thus bearing fruit that will last. Whilst few of us might ever be called to lay down our life for others, it is not the case the world over, nor do we know what the future holds for ourselves and those around us. And certainly living out our faith in this day and age is perhaps harder and more challenging than ever. But this is the love Jesus calls us to bear. Similarly, whilst we have been given such a direct message, how prepared are we to share that message with others, most simply by following the instruction and loving, but also by directly being prepared to stand up and say what we believe, preach what we have been taught, being direct, honest and open about our Catholicism and the Christian message? If anyone around us says they have not heard the message of Christ then in essence they are saying that they have not experienced the love of a Christian. We must never let that be the case.

Jesus said to his disciples, and today continues to cry out to us his Church, *‘what I command you is to love one another.*’ It was his last message to the Apostles. Let it be our first message to the world.

*Father,*

*You have asked us to continue to love one another,*

*for love comes from You.*

*Anyone who loves is Your child and knows You.*

*Those who do not love do not know You, for You are love.*

*You have shown how much You loved us*

*by sending Your one and only Son, Jesus, into the world*

*so that we might have eternal life through Him.*

*This is real love – not that we loved You, but You loved us*

*and sent Your Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.*

*Thank You, Jesus, for giving Your life for ours.*

*We were not worthy, yet, You made us worthy to love and know You.*

*Thank You for the greatness of your love!*

*Today, we confess that we will love You with all of our hearts, souls, strength and minds, and we will love our neighbour as we love ourselves.*

*Through your Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And for a hymn about love, how about ‘Love Divine, All Love’s Excelling’ – also appropriate as we look forward to the coming down of the Spirit of Love at Pentecost. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGGcqhKShQ8>

The photo of Eileen on her birthday which I posted on Friday showed her cutting a cake which a friend of mine made for her, and as you saw on yesterday’s photo, my sister in law had one devil of a chocolate cake for her birthday. And here is Eileen and her daughter again cooking a cake – this time a ‘Scripture Cake.’ The recipe for a ‘Scripture Cake’ includes ingredients all of which can be found in the Bible, which you might like to try. So open up your Bible, and try and find out the ingredients yourself, but if you need help, the answer to the references can be found at the end of this message. I’ve got to say, I had a little nibble, and it was jolly good.

Scripture Cake: A divine dessert inspired by ingredients found in the Bible.

1 cup Judges 5:25 last clause

1 cup Jeremiah 6:20

1 tablespoon I Samuel 14:25

3 Jeremiah 17:11

1 cup I Samuel 30:12 second food

1 cup Nahum 3:12, chopped

1/4 cup Numbers 17:8, blanched and chopped

2 cups 1 Kings 4:22

1 teaspoon Amos 4:5

3 tablespoons Judges 4:19 last sentence

Pinch of Leviticus 2:13

II Chronicles 9:9

Directions

Cream Judges, Jeremiah, and I Samuel.

Beat in the 3 Jeremiahs, one at a time.

Add I Samuel, Nahum, and Numbers, and beat again.

Sift together I Kings, II Chronicles, Leviticus, and Amos.

Add to first mixture. Lastly, add Judges.

Bake at 325F for 1 and 1/2 hours, or until done.

And if anyone does actually bake it, be sure to send me a photo! (or a slice, actually). You may need a little help with this rather beautiful prayer for bakers:

*Divine Culinarian who brought forth the Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation,*

*With gratitude, we celebrate the bakers in our midst. Through the work of their hands, they create edible masterpieces that neighbour can share with neighbour.*

*Their offerings bring peace to the ones looking for comfort food. Their offerings bring joy to the young people celebrating birthdays and the couples joining their lives together in marriage.*

*The bread they bake sits on communion tables as your children are reminded to ‘take and eat.’ The pastries created by them will bring people together in our fellowship when worship ends.*

*Bless their hands in the rolling of dough and the ovens as breads rise and bake. Bless the hearts who laugh together in the kitchen as they decorate cookies or finish pies.*

*Through the work of their hands, we partake in fellowship and see the presence of the Christ in our midst.*

*Amen.*

Over to the cooks! Have a great Sunday!

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.

*The ingredients for the Scripture Cake!*

*1 cup Judges 5:25 last clause (butter)*

*1 cup Jeremiah 6:20 (sugar)*

*1 tablespoon I Samuel 14:25 (honey)*

*3 Jeremiah 17:11 (eggs)*

*1 cup I Samuel 30:12 second food (raisins)*

*1 cup Nahum 3:12 (figs), chopped*

*1/4 cup Numbers 17:8 (almonds), blanched and chopped*

*2 cups 1 Kings 4:22 (flour)*

*1 teaspoon Amos 4:5 (leavener, such as baking soda)*

*3 tablespoons Judges 4:19 last sentence (milk)*

*Pinch of Leviticus 2:13 (salt)*

*II Chronicles 9:9 (spices, such as cinnamon and nutmeg)*

*Did you find them all?*