

Wednesday May 12th, 2021, Wednesday in the Sixth 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.

Have you got your Vaccine Passport? As we are off to Greece now, with Paul travelling to the great city of Athens where he gives another great sermon. He gets the Athenians on his side by first of all praising them for *'how extremely scrupulous you are in all religious matters.'* In Acts 17:15.22-18:1 he then tried to show the Athenians that their statue to the unknown god was really one to the true God, and *'we are all his children.'* It is all going down very well, until Paul mentions that Jesus was sent to call people to repentance, *'and God has publicly proved this by raising this man from the dead.'* At this many start laughing and scoffing at him, through there are a few who wish to speak with him again on the matter, and several of them become believers. It's good to know that even the great St. Paul's teaching wasn't always totally successful.

*Heavenly Father,
Remind me when people close their eyes to good acts,
remind me when people close their eyes to heavenly preaching,
that all your chosen ministers have known rejection, disappointment and discouragement.
Strengthen us to understand
That, as long as we have faithfully preached and acted upon your word,
Our job is done,
and the responses of those to whom we minister are in your hands.
Thy will be done! Amen! Alleluia!*

In John 16:12-15 Jesus continues to share with the Apostles the theology of the Holy Spirit, explaining to them that, *'when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth.'* The Spirit will also glorify Jesus. Jesus also reminds the Apostles (as John does at the end of his Gospel) that there is so much more Jesus could tell them, but they are not ready for everything as *'it would be too much for you now,'* hence the need of the Holy Spirit, by which time the Apostles will have experienced the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord.

*Oh, Holy Spirit,
You are the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.
You are the Spirit of truth, love and holiness,
proceeding from the Father and the Son, and equal to Them in all things.
I adore You and love You with all my heart.*

Teach me to know and to seek God, by whom and for whom I was created.

Fill my heart with a holy fear and a great love for Him.

Give me compunction and patience, and do not let me fall into sin.

In Your Triune Name. Amen.

‘Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me,’ (or in this very American sound version, ‘Spirit of the Living Gaaaaard.’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BagH-zTfnsQ>)

We have a few Saints we can mention today, firstly Saints Nereus and Achilleus, who were soldiers in the Roman army where they helped carry out the persecution of Christians. We are not told how they were converted, only that it was a ‘miracle of faith.’ After this miracle, they threw down their weapons and escaped from their camp, discarding armour and arms as they went toward their new life in Christ. As participants in the persecution, they knew perhaps better than any other Christian what pain awaited them. Faith, however, had triumphed over fear of death and the victory of martyrdom was the sweetest the had ever known.

Father,

we honour Saints Nereus and Achilleus for their courage

in dying to profess their faith in Christ.

May we experience the help of their prayers

at the throne of your mercy.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And our other Saint today is Saint Pancras. Legend tells us he was born at the end of the third century and brought up by an uncle in Rome after the death of his parents. Both he and his uncle became Christians. Saint Pancras was beheaded in 304 during Diocletian's persecution. He was only 14 years old. Pancras is especially venerated in England because Augustine of Canterbury dedicated his first church to Pancras and his relics were presented as a gift to the king of Northumberland. His name was given to an area of London, which in turn gives it's name to the busy International Railway station. He is Patron Saint of children, young people, jobs, and health.

Saint Pancras,

you gave away your young life rather than offer worship to a false god.

May your example inspire, and your intercession strengthen,

all young people to put love of God above all else.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The pictures of the Old Bispham Holiday Lodge obviously sparked a few memories and questions, so, thanks to Paul, we will be featuring Old Bispham in some weekly pictures and captions. Today, the Old Nissan Type Hut: Paul writes, ‘Older members of the congregation will remember the original school which also doubled up as the church hall. The Nissen like building was situated in a field just

north of the church. There was a rough diagonal path running from Devonshire Rd. Some will also remember teachers Mrs Reynolds and Mrs Egan. Pupils remained until they were seven and then moved to schools such as Holy Family, Sacred Heart, Blackpool and Cardinal Allen, Luton Rd., Cleveleys. The hall, which had a stage, was used for a variety of events including the Christmas Fayre, jumble sales, plays and shows and the youth club. ' Thanks to Paul, and thanks for the memories!

So do you remember your Patron Saints? Today I am invoking St. Apollonia – Patron saint of Dentists and going to the Dentists, as I'm off to my Dentists in Preston for a check-up (I have to go again on Friday for the hygienist, as due to Covid they don't work on the same day). Wish me luck!

Please pray for the repose of the soul of the poor young boy who was killed by a lightning strike in Blackpool yesterday afternoon, a shocking and tragic event. *May he rest in God's peace.* And please remember his family at this time.

Be blessed to have this day.

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.