

Thursday May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Thursday 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.

Today would usually be Ascension Thursday, but we will be celebrating the Feast as a community at all our Public Masses from Sunday this weekend, which leads us neatly down to Pentecost. And so we have 'daily readings for Thursday of Week Six of Eastertide'.

St Paul leaves Athens and heads to Corinth where he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla. Like Jesus, Paul began his preaching in Corinth to the Jewish community, but they turn against him and insult him, so Paul moves on, '... from now on I can go to the pagans with a clear conscience.' And he does so, moving to the house of Justus. After this the head of the Synagogue, Crispus, his disciples all become believers, as do many who hear Paul's words. Victory is snatched out of the jaws of defeat! There are quite a few names mentioned here, which are worth exploring:

Saint's Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers and Jewish converts to Christianity; a missionary couple; Priscilla, was perhaps the first woman missionary. They were among a group of people expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius in AD49. They met up with Saint Paul in Corinth and Saint Paul stayed with them for 18 months. They then travelled with Saint Paul to Ephesus and Syria. Saint Paul appointed St Aquila to be one of the first Bishops of Asia Minor. Tradition holds that both St Priscilla and St Aquila were martyred for their Christian faith. A great husband and wife team – the Eileen and Ian of Corinth, the Richard and Judy of the Athenians, the Phil and Holly... well maybe not quite...!)

Crispus was leader of the Synagogue. There were several rulers in a synagogue, which we find frequent mention of, as Matthew 9:18 Mark 5:22. Their office and place was, to advise and give order about the affairs of the synagogue, that all things might be performed according to their prescribed rules. After he was baptized by Saint Paul in Corinth, Greece, he later served as Bishop of Chalcedon, a maritime town in Asia Minor, which held one of the early Church Councils. He was martyred for his faith. Crispus' feast day is October 4<sup>th</sup> and he is counted among the Seventy disciples in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

As for Justus, very little is known, but as he is sometimes referred to as Titus Justus, he is often considered to be the same person as a Titus, the future companion of Paul.

Given everything he goes through, it is lovely that Paul had friends he could rely on for support. Let's say a prayer for our friends – and look forward to giving them a big hug soon.

*Stay blessed my friend.  
May each dawn celebrate newness of life for you.  
May each day bring forth goodness for you.  
May your life spring forth with abundant joy.  
May you not know lack.  
May you never want for any good thing your heart desires.  
May the Lord bless you richly, always.  
Stay blessed my friend.*

More final advice for the disciples from Jesus in John 16:16-20, referring to his Crucifixion and his Ascension: *'In a short time you will no longer see me, and then a short time later you will see me again... you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy.'* Let's prayer Psalm which takes up the theme of sorrows being turned into joy.;

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dreamed.  
Our mouths were filled with laughter,  
our tongues with songs of joy.  
Then it was said among the nations,  
'The Lord has done great things for them.'  
The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we are filled with joy.  
Restore our fortunes, Lord,  
like streams in the Negev.  
Those who sow with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.  
Those who go out weeping,  
carrying seed to sow,  
will return with songs of joy,  
carrying sheaves with them.*

So I pray today *'You Will Go Out With Joy, and Be Led Forth With Peace.'*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH0XbpNY2g8>

And today is the memorial of Our Lady of Fatima. On 13 May 1917, whilst guarding their families' sheep in the Cova da Iria, The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children, Lúcia dos Santos and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto. She brought a message of peace and reparation for sin, encouraging devotion to her Immaculate Heart, and the recitation of the Holy Rosary. Francisco died in 1919 and Jacinta in 1920, during the international Spanish flu pandemic. Lucia dos

Santos became a nun and lived until 2005. The two who died young were beatified on 13 May 2000 by Pope John Paul II, and were canonised by Pope Francis on 13 May 2017, the hundredth anniversary of the first apparition.

*Most Holy Virgin,  
who has deigned to come to Fatima to reveal to the three little shepherds  
the treasures of graces hidden in the recitation of the Rosary,  
inspire our hearts with a sincere love of this devotion,  
so that by meditating on the mysteries of our redemption that are recalled in it,  
we may gather the fruits and obtain the conversion of sinners,  
and the personal favours that I so earnestly seek,  
which I ask of your Immaculate Heart,  
for the greater glory of God, for your own honour, and for the good of all people. Amen.*

If you'd like to spend some more time in Fatima, the 1950's film is available here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrPOIys6SiM>

Or there is a children's cartoon version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq73fk01z2E>

Plans have changed from an outdoor Mass for the school, to two indoor Masses (Key Stage One and Key Stage Two) in the hall this morning, as we are expecting more stormy skies this afternoon according to the weather forecast - this photo was taken from the Church car park the other day. And I think it is only right I should supply each child with a cake to celebrate the Feast of Ascension! Not forgetting the staff...!

Have a great day, the best way you possibly 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.