

Monday May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Monday in the Seventh 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 so we begin our last week of Eastertide, happily with some opening up of restrictions. We have been able to raise the number of people in Church for funeral service, as well as for weddings, so hope is springing eternal, although liturgical restrictions for Mass, with regards to social distancing and wearing of masks, continues for the time being, although I am allowed to say 'the Body of Christ' to which you reply 'Amen' individually.

So, we continue travelling with Paul during this last week of Eastertide, and today he arrives in the great city of Ephesus. Ephesus was the most important city in Western Asia Minor (modern Turkey) in New Testament times. In fact, it was called 'the mother city' of Asia. It was an extremely important commercial centre-in fact, the largest trading centre in Asia Minor, attracting people from all over the world. Strabo, the Greek philosopher, historian and geographer, called it 'the greatest emporium in the province of Asia Minor'. So when Paul chose to plant a church here, he was choosing the key city in the region, from which he planned for the new church to reach out. In Acts 19:1-8 we are told that in Ephesus many people had been converted by Apollus, A Jew from Alexandria, who only knew about the baptism of John, and whilst proclaiming Jesus as the messiah, did not know about the significance of his death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Paul now comes on the scene and lays hands on Apollus' converts and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus makes his last words to the Apostles at the Last Supper, with a warning that they will all be scattered, leaving Jesus alone. In John 16:29-33 the Apostles now understand Jesus' words, even though they may have been somewhat disbelieving that they will scatter and leave him alone – and yet this is essentially what happened the following day on Good Friday, when only John stayed with Jesus for his crucifixion. But the disciples are not to be worried:

*'I have told you all this so that you may find peace with me.*

*In the world you will have trouble; but be brave.*

*I have conquered the world.'*

These are words that we should cling to in our darkest moments, perhaps words that have been useful during the past fifteen months are so. God will conquer all.

*Heavenly Father,*

*thank you that your grace is beyond measure.*

*Throughout eternity, you have been working for my good and the good of all your people.  
May I know your power and grace to conquer all the obstacles in my life.  
May the things that stand in my way become examples of your unconquerable power.  
Clothe me with power as I live my life in your righteous name.  
May I prosper and bring you glory on the earth.  
May I be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,  
Always knowing that you have conquered the world.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

God has conquered the world, and 'All Over The World, the Spirit Is Moving,' and if you feel like bouncing around as you sing it, well why not? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR4tE1kh-mE>

Yesterday afternoon I joined the crowds of people watching the Convoy of Motorcycles, Trucks, and cars being driven down the Front in memory of Jordan Banks – as you can see in the attached picture. I took the opportunity to film the children's prayer video as I watched, focusing on the theme of being in positions when we are not sure what to do: this was the prayer, and, as with so many prayers, it's quite appropriate for the last eighteen months, and coming months, also!

*God our heavenly Father.*

*Sometimes we don't know what to do.*

*We know we want to help people and do good, but we don't know what to do. Do we talk to them? Do we raise money for them? Do we drive our cars past in a convoy for them?*

*There are so many different ways we can help people, Father, but when we don't know what to do, we ask you to help us.*

*Father, your son Jesus told us the story of a man who was going to build a tower. He didn't just rush into it, building the first thing that came into his head. He thought carefully about it, he made plans, he made sure he had enough materials to build it with, he made sure he was building it in the right place, and before he did anything, he asked you to help him.*

*Whenever we are not sure how best we can help people, let us always take a little time, to think what would be the best way, what we could do, just how it would help people, and what we think you, and your Son Jesus would do in the same circumstances.*

*And let's remember that the first thing we should do, and sometimes it is the only thing that we can do, is to speak to you about it, to say a little prayer.*

*Someone once said; 'when all else fails, pray', when what they should have said was, 'before you do anything else, pray.'*

*And that is our pray today, A prayer we make through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Please pray for the repose of the soul of George Rainey, whose funeral I will celebrate at Church and at Carleton Crematorium this afternoon. *May he rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Enjoy the beginning of the week - and any covid-aware hugs you may have given or received!

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.