

Tuesday May 18th, 2021, Tuesday 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.

Time and Eastertide are moving on at a pace (it's the start of the two-week half-term on Friday!), and so we skip over the adventures and misadventures of Paul in Ephesus, and it is now time for Paul to leave and move on. Gathering the Elders of Ephesus together in Acts 20:17-27 he tells of the all-too-soon-to become-true premonitions he has about being a prisoner for the Lord. But he is not worried; he must still bear witness to the Good News; *'My life Is not a thing to waste words on, provided that when I finish my race I have carried out the mission the Lord Jesus gave me – and that was to bear witness to the Good News of God's grace.'* Paul prayed that the community would wisdom and knowledge, *'...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him...'* As we know, later he will write one of his greatest pastoral letters to the people of Ephesus, and this is Paul's beautiful prayer for the Ephesians, from his Letter to them.

*For this reason I kneel before the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you
with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people,
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge –
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

At the Last Supper Jesus has now said everything he has to say to the Apostles, and John 17:1-11 he begins his great prayer to this Heavenly Father, raising his eyes to heaven and acknowledging that now the hour of his glorification has come, nearing the completion of his great work for the Father in making his name known. However, typically never thinking solely of himself, Jesus prays for his Apostles; *'I pray for them... for those you have given me...'* The Gospel ends with Jesus saying to his Father, *'I am coming to you.'* Let us come before the Heavenly Father in prayer, that one day, like Jesus, we shall see him face to face:

Almighty God, my Eternal Father,

from the fullness of my soul I come in to Your presence.

I am deeply grateful that You have made me

in Your image and likeness,

and that You ever hold me in Your loving embrace.

Direct me to love You with all my heart,

with all my soul, and with my whole mind.

Direct me to love all Your children as I love myself.

O, my Father, my soul longs to be united to You,

and to see you face to face forever.

Amen.

‘Lead Us. Heavenly Father, Lead Us’, certainly over the world’s tempestuous sea, but any other tempests that prevent us journeying to heaven: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpkEeXWtWg0>

And today we are remembering Pope St. John I. Pope John I, born around 526 AD, inherited the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ. Italy had been ruled for 30 years by an emperor who espoused the heresy, though he treated the empire’s Catholics with toleration. His policy changed at about the time the young John was elected pope. When the eastern emperor began imposing severe measures on the Arians of his area, the western emperor forced John to head a delegation to the East to soften the measures against the heretics. Little is known of the manner or outcome of the negotiations - designed to secure continued toleration of Catholics in the West. On his way home, John was imprisoned at Ravenna because the emperor had begun to suspect that John’s friendship with his eastern rival might lead to a conspiracy against his throne. Shortly after his imprisonment, John died, apparently from the treatment he received in prison. John’s body was transported to Rome and he was buried in the Basilica of St. Peter.

Pope Saint John I,

your fidelity to your vocation as Pope led to your death.

You were faithful in the face of threats from civil power but did not bend to its will.

May all popes look to your example for inspiration in leading the Church.

And may we pray for your steadfastness and encouragement

When the waves of secularism and the distortion of our faith swale about us.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And let’s hope we can be as faithful – as perhaps not a lot has changed 1500 years later.

Well, it’s a gorgeous day, so busy or not, it’s deffo an afternoon for a walk on the prom. But what am I going to listen to, I hear you cry? Well ‘Oliver!’ was an answer on ‘The Chase’ last night, so I think it has to that! People forget that the show we all know and love was actually ground-breaking when it first appeared at the Theatre Royal Stratford East, in the far East end of London, with incredible sets,

and of course all those amazing tunes. It's also probably the only truly successful show based on a book by Charles Dickens (I sat through 'Hard Times' which for some reason they set in a circus, and there's been 'Nickleby!', 'Copperfield!', 'Smike!' ((what is it with all these exclamation marks?)), 'Great Expectations', which I last saw in Blackpool many moons ago with Darren Day as Pip, as well as 'Two Cities', 'Pickwick', 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' ((which was actually an unfinished novel, so at the end of Act Two the audience voted as to who the murderer was, so it was different every night)), and any number of variants of 'A Christmas Carol'). So it's Oom Pah Pah on the the Front this afternoon! See you there! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pt2TqskS0Is> Actually, maybe we should make it a week of Dicken's shows - I'll let you know how I get on...

It's Tuesday, so the gardeners are once again out in force – and how beautiful does our grotto look with the spring-into-summer flowers? God bless them!

Enjoy this beautiful today!

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.