

Saturday May 22nd, 2021, Saturday 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 what a beautiful day it is after the rain yesterday!

As we reach the end of Eastertide, so we come to some endings in the Scriptures, firstly the very end of Acts of the Apostles. Paul appeals to Rome, and to get us to there we miss all his adventures (so it's well worth having an extra read of Acts of the Apostles to find out about them). In our reading today, Acts 28:16-20, 30-31 Paul explains to the leading Jews in the city why he is there, an appeal to Roman because of the Jew's accusations in other places. Whilst this is not the end of Paul's journey, we leave him for now, here in Rome; *'Paul spent the whole of two years... proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete freedom and without hindrance from anyone.'* This is St. Paul's own 'thank you' prayer to the people of the city of Phillip. Today, let us make it our own prayer of thanksgiving to St. Paul for all he has done for each one of us – and continues to do...

*I thank my God for you every time I think of you;
and every time I pray for you all, I pray with joy
because of the way in which you have helped me in the work of the gospel
from the very first day until now.
And so I am sure that God, who began this good work in you,
will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.
Amen.*

And for our last weekday of Eastertide we reach the very end of the Gospel of St. John. It's a lovely little epilogue, and really brings us to the *person* of St. John, in exile in his dotage on the Island of Patmos, looking back on everything he has witnessed and experienced, and also contemplating that he is the last Apostle alive, the one chosen by God to not die the martyr's death. John mentions that Jesus' prophecies about John himself do not say that he will *not* die, but that the time of his death is up to the Jesus. As so it is. The Gospel concludes reminding us that the four Evangelists only give us glimpses - four different glimpses - of the life of Christ, and *'There were many other things that Jesus did; if all were written down, the world itself, I suppose, would not hold all the books that would have to be written.'* It's quite tantalizing to know that there is so much about the life of Jesus that we just *don't* know! I guess those treasures will be awaiting us in heaven, when, as with the disciples on the

road to Emmaus, Jesus can explain the Scriptures, and the missing years, to us ourselves in person. And how our hearts will burn within us! Let's pray St. Paul's Canticle from the Letter to the Ephesians:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,
just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...
He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom
with the blood of his son and forgave our sins.
He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.
God has now revealed to us His mysterious will regarding Christ
which is to fulfil His own good plan.
And this is the plan:
At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ -
everything in heaven and on earth.
Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

As we await our celebrations of the coming of the Holy Spirit this weekend at Pentecost let us pray 'Come Down, O Love Divine,' in a lovely orchestral and choral version.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLjaslOT8TA>

Slightly damp walk yesterday (actually very damp by the time I was walking back down Redbank Road) but I was determined to finish my Dickens of a week with 'Great Expectations', in which a lot of obvious songs go through the whole of novel at breakneck speed. If you know the novel you could probably have written it yourself. Highlights (or lowlights) include 'I call myself Pip' for, er, Pip, and 'Cobwebs and Cake' for, you guessed, Miss Haversham, as well as a final love duet entitled 'We Are Each Other' which is unintentionally creepy (it's all out there on the YouTube somewhere). I unequivocally don't recommend it, but it was an appropriate ending to the week, especially as yesterday was World Book Day!

Yes, World Book Day, with the School taking the day very seriously indeed, with everybody dressing up as their favourite literary characters! Mrs. Satterthwaite writes, '*What a fantastic array of characters for Book Day from classics such as 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe' to new books such as 'Cogheart'. The costumes were amazing, and the children have had a wonderful day making bookmarks, solving crosswords and writing character descriptions. Congratulations to those children who won the Book Character competitions. And thank you to all the staff who joined in with the spirit of the day with their assortment of character outfits. £122.30 was raised for CAFOD.*' Well done to all the pupils and staff - not least to Mrs. Cruella de Satterthwaite!

This week we will be celebrating Pentecost at all our Public Masses, with 5pm and 10am this weekend live streamed as usual, and available on the YouTube site. The Church is open for private prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament between Noon and 1pm tomorrow, during which time I will be in the sacristy if anyone needs a word, or the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please note that there is no Noonday mass this coming Thursday.

So enjoy this lovely Day on this lovely Eve of the lovely Feast of Pentecost! *Come, Holy Spirit...*

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.