

Wednesday June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Wednesday in the Eleventh Week of Ordinary Time Year I

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.

I'm getting used to these early starts, with an 8:30am morning Mass before my pick up to head for Lytham Park, so on with the Wednesday!

Paul is still on monetary matters in II Corinthians 9:6-11, continuing his appeal for the Jerusalem collection. He gives a theological and scriptural basis for this, reminding us that *'As Scripture says, He was fere in almsgiving, and gave to the poor; his good deeds will never be forgotten.'* He tells us quite rightly that anything we give to others has already been provided to us through the goodness of God, and indeed he will supply us with more than we need to give us the very opportunity of giving to those more in need. All we have belongs to Him.

*Blessed Father,  
you are above all in gifts,  
and out of your giving you have taught me the way  
to a fuller identification of myself with you.  
Not only your gift of Jesus and your gift of the Spirit,  
but every day your gifts are given to me like manna in the wilderness.  
All I have belongs to you, and of these gifts I am only a trustee.  
Command their use as shall please you, for those in need,  
and give me the experience of the giver's joy.  
Let me see clearly the sin of covetousness and deepen my hatred of its practice.  
In the name of your unspeakable Gift be praise and dominion forever.  
Amen.*

And neatly following on from St. Paul, the Gospel reading today, Matthew 6:1-6,16-18 warns against any showiness or ostentatiousness in our religious practices - particularly with regards to prayer, almsgiving and fasting, which, as you will remember, are our three religious disciplines especially during the Season of Lent - indeed today's Gospel is the same reading we have on Ash Wednesday when we begin that penitential season. Let us make sure that all our religious practices are done with a sincere heart:

*O lord my God,  
teach me to pray with sincerity!*

*Work with my heart that I might understand.  
Work with my head, that my mind and body might be one.  
Work with my tongue,  
that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart might be acceptable to you.  
Help me know that prayer is not judged by the eloquence of words,  
but the sincerity of the heart.  
Help me to rise above the temptation to display my spirituality  
through meaninglessness long-winded speeches.  
Grant me a sincere faith and a genuine hope and love.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen*

‘How Great Thou Art’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48i411715uc> definitely a hugely popular hymn in American judging by the many and varied (and actually, in lots of cases, really good) versions on the YouTube.

And for a truly sincere prayer you can’t beat the familiar prayer of St. Richard of Chichester, whose Memorial it is today. Richard was born in what is now known as Droitwich in 1197, and was educated in England and France, before becoming chancellor of Oxford University and eventually advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury, before he became Bishop of Chichester in 1244, where his beautiful simplicity of life brought many people to the faith, before he died while preaching in Dover in 1253. His simplicity is shown in his well known, beautifully simple prayer.

*Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits thou hast given me,  
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know thee more clearly,  
love thee more dearly,  
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.  
Amen.*

So, time for a walk on the prom, suitably G7 themed, as we hang around Germany and Austria to listen to a Viennese/German Rock Opera; ‘Mozart!’ (the exclamation mark is very important) with music by Sylvester Levay, who has written lots of Rock Operas, virtually none of which have made it into the English speaking world, although he is huge in Japan (as were the Nolan Sisters, which may explain everything. Or nothing.). It has lyrics by Michael Kunze who did the German translations for ‘Evita’, ‘Cats’, ‘Phantom’, and, er, ‘Mamma Mia!’ (there’s that exclamation mark again). Apparently ‘Mozart!’ tells the story of a young man who is *‘trapped by his past as the child prodigy, during which he was trained to be disciplined and respectful, now living a life of wild abandon, desperately*

*seeking artistic freedom and liberation from his possessive father.* I'm guessing he writes a few tunes along the way, but I'm not sure. Anyway, here is the TV trailer – aficionados of Mozart, if you don't want to know the score, look away now...!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIVs6XKHYY&t=11s>

And as it's Wednesday Paul is continuing our series of Old Bispham, with three extraordinary pictures, especially for us newcomers. Paul writes: *'The first three photos in the Old Bispham series. The postcards span a period of 44 years and show just how much All Hallows Road, previously Church Road, has changed. Photo 1. In this 1911 scene looking towards Bispham Parish Church the original Red Lion public house can be seen on the extreme left. It was closed in July 1939. There had been a public house on this site since the late 1790's. Photo 2. This 1955 scene is one that the older members of the congregation will remember. It has been taken from close to the old newsagents shop looking towards the village. It was a relatively sleepy village with character, unlike today. Photo 3. This 1938 photo has been taken from the village and Daisy Bank, in the centre of the picture, can be clearly made out. This building was opposite the church hall and was demolished in the late 1980's. Denebank replaced it. The roundabout was once the site of Bispham Post Office.'* Cheers, Paul. Much appreciated.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Terence Dowling, whose funeral I will be celebrating at Lytham Park later this morning. *May he rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

And make the most of the mid-week!

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.