

Friday June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Friday in the Twelfth 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.

Welcome to the end of the week, and hopefully the start of a sunny weekend!

As a sign of the covenant or sacred pact given by God to Abram, in Genesis 17:1,9-10, his name was changed to Abraham and his wife's name to Sarah. She would eventually bear him a son, who is to be named Isaac, and who would be circumcised as a further sign of God's covenant - as would all the male children descended from Abraham. Both of Abraham's children, Ishmael and Isaac will be granted great families, but the Covenant will continue through the line of Isaac, the child of Abraham and Sarah. You are going to have to keep up with this plot, as we've got several weeks of it!

And Matthew 8:1-4 gives us a beautiful healing miracle story, as Jesus cures a leper, who immediately professes his faith in Christ, knowing that Jesus can cure him. himself to the priests to have his cure confirmed. Jesus instructs the man to show himself to the priest and make the prescribed offering, fulfilling the law. Jesus' words to the man, when he asks to be cured are poetically beautiful, 'Of course I want to! Be cured!' Whenever we ask something of the Lord in prayer we should have this answer of our Lord at the forefront of our hearts. Perhaps we should say a little prayer to thank God for hearing and answering all our prayers knowing that 'of course He wants to!'

*Dear Father,*

*I thank you for answered prayers*

(perhaps you might like to mention here the answer to a prayer you have received).

*Heavenly Father, thank you for always hearing and answering my prayers whenever I pray.*

*Father thank you for loving me this much.*

*Thank you for always being faithful to me.*

*Thank you for your goodness in my life.*

*Thank you for the abundance of provision in my life.*

*Thank you Lord, for your abundance of Grace which is working in every area of my life.*

*Thank you father, for all future answered prayers*

*in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

So 'Now Thank we All Our God' for all graces received, 'with hearts and minds and voices':

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

And today in our diocese of Lancaster we are remembering Our Lady of Fernyhalgh at Ladyewell, just outside Preston. Devotion to Our Lady of Fernyhalgh goes back through the ages to the 11th century. Since the Reformation a devotion to Our Lady as Queen of Martyrs has developed here, which is reflected at Ladyewell in the reliquary, the presence of the Burgess Altar and the chapel of the English Martyrs. There has never been an apparition of Our Blessed Lady at Fernyhalgh, just beautifully continued prayer and petition over seven centuries. Even during penal times apart from a period of five years, the shrine attracted pilgrims and was the focus of local Catholic prayer. The name Fernyhalgh is thought by some historians to mean 'Ancient Shrine'. The name Ladyewell originally appears to have developed following the rebuilding of the present house in 1685. Pilgrims from the diocese and from all over England continue to make their way to this beautiful shrine where they intercede to Our Blessed Lady, bring their petitions and leave unburdened and spiritually renewed. Today gives us an opportunity to give thanks for the witness of faith which has been handed down to us to be believed with faithfulness and love.

*Almighty God and Father,  
the legend of the well has carried over centuries  
devotion to our Lady of Fenyhalgh  
even when to be faithful was a call to martyrdom.  
May we today confront the more subtle challenges of the world to our faith  
as we renew our prayers for your protection  
through the intercession of Mary, Mother of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

I'm afraid I've no picture of Ladyewell for you, so picture of a pile of donated food will have to do instead! Eileen and I had a lovely afternoon yesterday popping round to a couple of our schools, as well as to the homeless shelter in town to deliver these, and several other, offerings. Many thanks to all those who are striving to help those less fortunate at this time. May God bless you all! Next week I will be announcing my August challenge to raise money for families this coming Autumn – it's quite complicated, so I am going to have to start in July – more news next week!

Let's enjoy the end of the week and look forward to the weekend!

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.