

Saturday June 26th, 2021, Saturday 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 weekend. Whatever the weather, I hope you get some time for rest, relaxation, and some prayer!

Despite several promises of a great descendency to Abraham and his Son, both Abraham and Sarah laugh when a stranger tells Sarah she would have a child within a year (neither of them realise that the stranger is actually an Angel. But with God, nothing was impossible, although God himself is not impressed with their incredulous laughter, asking Abraham in Genesis 18:1-15, '*Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything so wonderful for the Lord?*'.

And again, following on from the healing of the leper yesterday, today we have another great healing miracle in response to great example and profession of faith in Jesus with the curing of the centurion's servant. The Gospel tells us that Jesus was 'astonished' at the man's faith, before going on to the house of Peter where he cures his Mother-in-Law. Matthew 8:5-17 concludes telling us that, '*This was to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah; 'He took our sickness away, and carried our diseases for us.'*' Let us pray a prayer for health and healing for us all:

*Almighty God,
you are the only source of health and healing.
In you there is calm, and the only true peace in the universe.
Grant to each one of us your children an awareness of your presence,
and give us perfect confidence in you.
In all pain and weariness and anxiety teach us to yield ourselves to your never-failing care,
knowing that your love and power surround us,
trusting in your wisdom and providence to give us health and strength and peace
when your time is best;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And conscious of the strange times we are living in, let us continue to pray:

*God ever present and ever caring,
hear our fervent prayer for all who suffer from the coronavirus.
May those who are infected receive the proper treatment
and the comfort of your healing presence.*

*May their families, neighbours and their caregivers be shielded from the virus.
Protect and guide those who strive to conquer the disease
and restore communities to wholeness and health.
Help us to fast from fear and walk in wisdom, compassion and trust
that you our God are ever present with us.
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

For peace and healing for the world 'Lay Your Hands Gently Upon Us'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SdeWyVBQCg>

I'm a bit late on mentioning the fact (well, it's been a busy week!) but last Monday, 21st, was the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year in most time zones in the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere, on the other hand, it is the shortest day of the year and is known as the winter solstice. Solstice comes from the Latin words sol, meaning Sun and sistere, meaning to come to a stop or stand still. On the day of the June solstice, the Sun reaches its northernmost position, as seen from the Earth. At that moment, its zenith does not move north or south as during most other days of the year, but it stands still at the Tropic of Cancer. It then reverses its direction and starts moving south again. The opposite happens during the December solstice. Then, the Sun reaches its southernmost position in the sky - Tropic of Capricorn - stands still, and then reverses its direction towards the north. Technically it is the First day of Summer (someone should have told the weather people that!). This is a prayer that was written for the First day of Summer, but actually I think it is appropriate for the start of any season, or any day for that matter – or perhaps appropriate as we look towards the end of Lockdown?

Take time to claim your strength; they are gifts of God.

Take time to have fun; it's God's way of teaching you your strengths.

Take time to grow yourself; only you can grow you.

Take time to trust yourself; God trusts you.

Take time to be self-reliant; it is better than being dependent.

Take time to share with others; they will bless you, and you will bless them.

Take time to have hope, you are a child of God.

And Amen to that! And here's a sunrise I took in Egypt many moons – or many suns – ago!

Today I ask you especially to pray for the response of the soul of James Neary, who died this week. Some of you may know James, as several years ago he came here on a placement as a student for the priesthood. Let us keep his family in our prayers at this sad time, and for James, let us pray:

May you rest in the arms of the Lord who formed you from the dust of the earth.

May holy Mary, the angels and all the saints welcome you now that you have gone forth from this life.

May Christ who was crucified for you, bring you freedom and peace.

May Christ who died for you admit you into his garden of paradise.

May Christ, the true Shepherd, embrace you as one of his flock.

May he forgive all your sins, and set you among those he has chosen.

May you see your Redeemer face to face, and enjoy the vision of God, forever.

I'm sure you know the score; Masses celebrated and streamed tonight at 5pm, tomorrow at 10am, and the Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament with Confessions in the Sacristy from Noon till 1pm.

Don't forget there is plenty of room on the Sunday Masses that we celebrate at noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with an extra Mass at 7pm on Monday evening for the Feast of Peter and Paul.

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.