

Sunday June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, The Thirteenth Sunday in ordinary Time Year B

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.

A lovely morning to wake up to, with no storms!

Last week in the Gospel of the calming of the storm we saw how the first person the Apostles turned to when they were in trouble was Jesus. In this morning's Gospel, Mark 5:21-43, Jesus seems to be the last resort, and even he at one point is even considered by some people to have failed. The first reading, Wisdom 1:13-15,2:23-24, speaks of how sickness and death were never a part of God's plan, but are a consequence, a consequence, note, not a punishment, a consequence of sin. Today we see the consequences of faith in the man who can take our sins away: healing, reconciliation, and new life.

For the women suffering from a blood disorder, it does seem to be that Jesus is a last resort: she's tried everything else, and spent all her money doing so. Having now heard about Jesus she somehow has gained an inkling of his divine power and believes, and finally puts her faith in him rather than earthly charlatans, believing - quite rightly, as it turns out - that even to touch his cloak might heal her. As Jesus says on many occasions: *'Your faith has healed you'*. The healing of the synagogue official Jairus' daughter begins with great flourishes of faith as he earnestly pleads for the life of his daughter. While Jairus' faith is strong, the faith of others is not as steadfast, as when his daughter dies, they send word not to bother Jesus, as nothing can be done. But Jairus doesn't lose his faith in Jesus, even at the news of his daughter's death. Jesus encourages Jairus to be strong and not afraid, and in the midst of the Jewish rites of death, Jesus simply and gently restores the little girl's life. Eileen has helpfully provided us with a knitted version of the scene.

As with virtually all the miracles, Jesus responds with divine intervention to the faith shown by the people around him, often, as here, in contrast to the lack of faith shown by others, and as demonstrations of his divine power, such miracles are clearly powerful signs, and here they clearly show Jesus' power over sickness and death, and, as I said, as these are a consequence of sin in the world, then they clearly also show his power over sin. Healing, new life, and the forgiveness of sins happily forge together in the teaching and life of Christ - in his preaching and his ministry.

Nor should they be separated in our lives. While many of our prayers often focus on healing and life - especially in these times - not forgetting the prayers for the dead which we invariably include in our

bidding prayers, let us never forget the need for the forgiveness of our sins as a sign our faith in Christ. Perhaps with a greater understanding of sin, sickness and death we might all turn to Christ less as a 'last resort', nor lose all hope at times of death and despair, like Jairus' daughter's mourners.

We should always remember that the miracles were only demonstrations, only signs of Jesus' divinity. His ultimate salvific act was on the cross, when in dying he conquered sin and death, and in rising brought us to new life, forgiving our sins, and opening up the way to glory. In doing so Jesus amply demonstrated his faith and love for every human being. In turning to him, in seeking forgiveness, in bringing before him at all times our ills and pains, and our joys and hopes, and our need for physical and spiritual healing, let us demonstrate our faith and love of him. And the answer to our prayers, to all our cries heavenwards, is assured.

This prayer of thankfulness to God also has a gentle reminder that, like the Woman with the blood disorder and Jairus, we should 'never give up':

*Dear Heavenly God, I come to you today with love, understanding, determination, and thankfulness for you always hearing me and knowing me so well.*

*Thank you for my life, my family, my friends and all the experiences I have upon this earth each and every single day. I thank you for your guidance and light, peace and your protection. I thank you for loving me like you do.*

*Thanks, because if it wasn't for you, I don't know how I would have made it.*

*Thank you for everything I have and for you telling me 'don't give up'. Thank you most of all for You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and all the angelic forces, for all you do.*

*May our relationship stay strong and stay close. May we continue on forward on this path together. With you, all things are possible. Thank you, praise you and glory to you. I Love You.*

*Amen.*

And any excuse to sing 'Shine, Jesus, Shine.' Especially in such a nice, bouncy version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaTwx0ehbvM>

In one of last week's Gospels, we heard what is considered to be one of the origins of the phrase 'wolf in sheep's clothing,' though I mentioned it actually goes back before Christianity to Aesop and his Fables. Here are ten phrases, everyday expressions that do indeed come from the Bible.

'Man Shall Not Live By Bread Alone': Deuteronomy 8:3 *'So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.'* This is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 4:4 *'But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'*

*'Fight the Good Fight': 1 Timothy 6:12 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.'* And Paul uses to the phrase when looking back on his life in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, *'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.'*

*'Go the Extra Mile': Matthew 5:41 'And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.'*

*'Give Up the Ghost': John 19:30 'When Jesus had therefore received the vinegar, He said 'It is finished:' and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.'* As an act of will, in accordance with the Father's will, Jesus committed His spirit to His Father.

*'The Powers That Be': Romans 13:1 'Let every soul subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained by God.'*

*'Fall By the Wayside': Luke 8:5 'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.'*

*'Nothing New Under the Sun': Ecclesiastes 1:9 'That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.'*

*'The Writing on the Wall': Daniel 5:5 'In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.'* And the writing on the wall, interpreted by the prophet Daniel, tells King Belshazzar that his time is up! (I remember studying the oratorio 'Belshazzar's Feast' by William Walton for my Music 'A' level – I might have to give it a listen today!)

*'Fall From Grace': Galatians 5:4 'You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.'*

*'The Root of the Matter': Job 19:28-29 'If you should say, "How shall we persecute him?" - Since the root of the matter is found in me, be afraid of the sword for yourselves; For wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment.'*

I was looking for a suitable photo to add to today's message, so how about these two - both containing 'writing on the wall', taking on holidays many years ago, one being in Prague, and one of the Berlin Wall. That's writing on the wall for you! Somewhat of a loose connection, but hey ho! And if you want to find out exactly what was 'written on the wall' in Daniel 5:5 you could check out this video from the Proms of 'Belshazzar's Feast' – and cut to minute 23!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLJWE1RoEk>

Don't forget the Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament with Confessions in the Sacristy from Noon till 1pm. today. And we have an extra Mass on **Monday evening at 7pm** for the Eve of the Feast of St. Peter and Paul, as well as plenty of space at our weekday noontide Masses.

I hope you are having a great weekend, and let's look forward to a great week – with lots of Saints to celebrate...!

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.