

Thursday July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Thursday in the Thirteenth 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.

Well, bit of a dark start weather wise to the month, but it's another beautiful day to wake up to, for two beautiful, and hugely important readings today. This morning in Genesis 22:1-9 we have the moving reading in which Abraham is given his greatest test of faith - would he offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God? It is with a heavy heart that Abraham is prepared to comply with the will of God, but such a test proves Abraham's worth, with God supplying a ram instead as a burnt offering, and formally re-iterating the great promise of Abraham's descendancy; *'I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore... All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience.'* From Psalm 31: *'Lord God, You are my refuge and defence; guide me and lead me as you have promised. Keep me safe from the trap that has been set for me; shelter me from danger. I place myself in your care. You will save me, Lord; you are a faithful God.'*

Behind many of the miracles of Jesus was a spiritual message, and in Matthew 9:1-8 we have the classic example of this, the healing of the paralytic. Here before healing the man Jesus forgives the paralytic his sins – which causes great consternation among the bystanders. But Jesus insists that forgiveness of sins – which he has the power to do – is more important, and implies even easier, than physical healing, going on to tell the man, *'pick up your bed and go off home.'* This is a prayer for all those who may be seeking physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual Healing

*Lord God Almighty,*

*Giver of life and Source of all Goodness,*

*We come before You, full of childlike trust and confidence in Your merciful love.*

*Please grant healing in mind, soul, spirit and body to those who need your help.*

*Great are people's needs to be reassured of Your power over all that afflict them.*

*Great is their need to experience that your love and support can triumph*

*over all the crushing pain that may have befallen them through the years.*

*Embrace them with the warmth of your love*

*and raise them high above all that seek to destroy their faith in You and your loving-kindness.*

*This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

I said it was dark skies this morning (so far) but still, 'Morning (and the month) have Broken', so let's make that our hymn this morning! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFgB1-Von\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFgB1-Von_g)

And today we remember St. Oliver Plunkett, who was born in Loughcrew, Co. Meath on the 1st of November, 1625. Born into a wealthy family with powerful connections, Plunkett was able to follow his dream of becoming a priest by travelling to Rome in 1647. After receiving an education at the Irish College in Rome, Plunkett was ordained as a priest in 1654, acting as a representative for the Irish Catholic bishops. Meanwhile, back home in Ireland, tensions rising between Catholics and Protestants as made it illegal to publicly practise Catholicism. Many members of the Catholic clergy were executed as a result of this ruling. This made it impossible for Plunkett to return home without risking his life. Due to persecutions in Ireland following Cromwell's conquest of 1649-1653, Oliver stayed in Rome where he campaigned for the relief of the Irish Catholics. In recognition of his efforts, he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1669, setting up a Jesuit college which saw an integration of both Catholic and Protestant students, the first of its kind in Ireland. After becoming entangled in an anti-Catholic conspiracy, in which a number of men were falsely accused of plotting to have King Charles II assassinated, Plunkett was sentenced to death for treason and 'promoting the Roman faith' and executed on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1681. Almost 300 years later he was beatified and canonized, then becoming the first new Irish saint in about 700 years. He is the Irish patron saint of peace and reconciliation.

*Glorious Martyr, Oliver, who willingly  
gave your life for your faith,  
help us also to be strong in faith.  
May we be loyal like you to the See of Peter.  
By your intercession and example  
may all hatred and bitterness  
be banished from the hearts  
of all men and women.  
May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts,  
as it did in your heart,  
even at the moment of your death.  
Pray for us and for Ireland. Amen.*

And now over to Paul for our weekly Bispham Throwback Photo series! *'This week's photos are concentrated around the centre of the village. Ivy Cottage was Bispham's best known and best loved domestic building. Thousands of people who stayed in Blackpool from the late 19th century onwards came in wagonettes or on foot to the tearooms, for Bispham was a favourite trip out, the village still having signs of rusticity, a haven from noisy Blackpool. It was built in 1686 and was one of the typical three-bay cruck houses which abounded in the Fylde. Some of our older parishioners would probably remember it well, as it was only demolished in about 1958. Note Bispham Old Post Office and cottages on the right of the photo. Bispham Old Post Office was situated on the current village car*

*park. It is on the right in this excellent pre-WW2 photo. It was a brick building of Victorian construction and adjoining are two little cottages. Ivy Cottage can be seen to the left of centre. When the Post Office was demolished the site was cleared and a traffic island replaced it. The second scene of the Post Office is taken from a 1904 printed postcard. It clearly shows how it was surrounded by the road system. On the right of the picture are a row of three cottages. Originally built of cobbles and clay, they were demolished in 1961. The sign on the right, pointing to Red Bank Road, says " To the Sea Shore and Tram Station".' Cheers to Paul for the photos of a village which it is very hard to recognise now!*

I hoe you enjoy the sunshine that is promised later somehow and have a great day.

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.