

Thursday July 22nd, 2021, Thursday in the Sixteenth 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.

Another scorcher of a day, so be careful out there in the sun!

At the foot of Mount Sinai in the wilderness, in Exodus 19, Moses was given a public seal of approval from God, with a huge theophany of clouds, shaking mountains, and the sound of trumpets, with the Lord himself coming down upon the Mountain top of Sinai, *'You are blest Lord God of our Fathers, to you glory and praise for ever more.'*

Following on from the Parable of the Sower, an explanation of which Jesus will give us in tomorrow's gospel, today in Matthew 13:10-17, Jesus explains to the Apostles just why he speaks in Parables. The stories always bring a spiritual message, and only those who close their ears will miss the message, *'You will listen and listen again, but not understand.'* We pray that our hearts will be open to the word of God.

Almighty God, in you are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Open our eyes that we may see the wonders of your Word; and give us grace that we may clearly understand and freely choose the way of your wisdom.

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today.

Guide us, O God, by your Word, and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And today is the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, one of the closest disciples of Jesus. Originally from Magdala in Galilee, Mary is often associated with the woman from whom Jesus cast our seven devils, although the actual identity of Mary is of much scriptural and theological discussion. Mary remained with Lord during his last agony on the cross, and, according to the Gospels of St. Mark and St. John was the first human being to see Jesus after the resurrection. After the Ascension, nothing is certain of her life. There is a Greek tradition that St. Mary Magdalene went to Ephesus with the Blessed Virgin Mary and was buried there. Yet, there is a competing tradition that St. Mary Magdalene lived the last thirty years of her life in a cave at La Sainte-Baume, France. Regardless of her resting place, her example of love and service towards Christ is great example, and she helps us to understand the incomprehensible love of God.

*Saint Mary Magdalene,
who by conversion became the beloved of Jesus,
thank you for your witness
that Jesus forgives through the miracle of love.
Thank you for being with our Blessed Lord in his agony,
and thank you for witnessing to his resurrection,
that those who have not seen may too believe
and proclaim the living Christ.
You, who already possess eternal happiness
in His glorious presence,
please intercede for me, so that some day
I may share in the same everlasting joy.
Amen.*

And over to Paul for our weekly Bispham Throwback!

'Although this printed postcard from 1916 is of Norbreck Poultry Farm it also contains interesting information on old Bispham. Looking at the top left of the photo you will see the area known as Churchtown. At the centre is All Hallows church with its associated buildings. Also visible are Church Farm and on the extreme left a row of terraced houses which can still be seen today. On the top right there is the original Red Lion pub. Note that there is no Devonshire Road. It was not until 1930 that this road reached 'The Knowle', soon to pass through Bispham Village into Norbreck and joining Fleetwood Road just south of Mossom Lane.

Bamber's Farm stood on the corner of Red Bank Road and Devonshire Road. This photograph shows some of the outbuildings which were situated to the east of the farmhouse. Note the toilet block on the extreme right, the remains of this building still standing today. When this farm was built I do not know, but records show that William Fleetwood sold this property to Richard Bamber, the then tenant, in 1596. It was demolished in or about 1950.

This photograph is of the building that housed Bispham Endowed School from 1878 until 1964. There has been a school on this site since the end of the 18th century, but no one knows exactly when the first free school was founded in Bispham. However, records show a certain Mr Bamber was the headmaster from 1621 until 1655. More than likely, he was a member of the Bamber family living at the farm opposite the later school. The fact that this school ever came about is thanks to Richard Higginson, a local lad who was baptised at Bispham Church in 1603. He left Bispham for London, became an Alderman, and amassed a fortune. His will of 1659 left an annual sum of £30 for a schoolmaster and usher. History shows that there were numerous setbacks but thanks to his wife and others his wish that the children of Bispham had a satisfactory standard of welfare and education came to fruition. In recent years the building has been used by the Sea Cadets.'

Once again, huge thanks to Paul for helping us to understand the present by looking at our past!

It's such a lovely day, how about we sing 'Shine, Jesus, Shine!'?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gr5Y63bDNNg>

Whatever you are doing today, make it as sunny in your heart, as it is in the sky!

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.