

Friday April 3rd, Friday in the Fifth Week in Lent Year A.

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the advice from the government and the medics about what we should be doing in this time of crisis.

And I hope everyone is praying together for our all our intentions in this time of need.

Once again the Scriptures help us to see through this time of crisis. Today at mass we read from Psalm 17:

*The waves of death rose about me;
the torrents of destruction assailed me;
the snares of the grave entangled me;
the traps of death confronted me.
In my anguish I called to the Lord;
I cried to my God for help,
my cry came to his ears,
from his temple he heard my voice.*

A beautiful prayer to remind us that 'from these depths' we can be sure our prayers are being heard.

As it is Friday, I would once again ask that we could come together spiritually to pray The Stations of the Cross at 3pm, or at any other time that you are able. The Stations of the Cross were originally created to imitate the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem for people who were unable to make a pilgrimage there. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Franciscans in particular started creating Stations en route to their Churches, and in 1731 Pope Clement XII gave permission for all Churches to have Stations of the Cross as long as they were built by Franciscans, and it was at this time that the Stations were fixed in the form we know them today. It was not until 1857 that the Bishops of England were given permission to erect Stations of the Cross themselves. Last week I sent you the traditional 'St. Alphonsus' Stations, but there are many different versions, and I have a whole box of little books, to ring the changes every week as I celebrate them. I know a lot of you are particularly fond of the Stations of the Cross of Mary, where we hear the voice of Mary, contemplating her son's passion each step of the way. Today I attach a set of stations which feature meditations by Mother Theresa of Calcutta. A lot of her prayers are particularly appropriate at this time. Today let us all join in with a rousing rendition of 'On A Hill Far Away Stood An Old Rugged Cross'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO4Rhc_fRKg

Once again it was beautiful and moving to hear all the claps and cheers over Bispham last night for our carers. We really are united in our support for them and salute all members of our Parish who are tirelessly working at this time, not forgetting our teachers who are keeping the schools open right through Easter to care for key workers' children.

Don't forget that Palms are available in the porch, as are the DVD's of Mass. I'm posting out DVD's to those who have asked for them, and if you would like either or both mailed to you, just drop me a mail. Cheers.

In other news, Tobias, The Presbytery Cat, has been looking absolutely everywhere for his treats... as you can see in the attached photo.

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Any suggestions for ways to keep our faith and spirits up at this time are most welcome!

And remember, St. Bernadette's is not closed, though the building is; 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.