

Saturday June 20th, Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

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 having celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart yesterday, today we turn to our Blessed Mother and celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Whilst the image of Sacred Heart shows the heart surrounded by a crown of thorns, Mary's heart is pictured with a sword through it, referring to the prophecy of Simeon at the Presentation of Our Lord, '...a sword will pierce your soul, too.' (Luke 2:35). Luke's Gospel also records on two occasions that when witnessing events in the life of Jesus Mary, '*pondered these things in heart*' Today's Feast once again reminds us of a heart full of love, a heart that experienced much joy and a great sorrow, and a heart that contemplated the events surrounding one immaculate life. In the words of St. Gertrude, '*After the Power of the Father, the Wisdom of the Son, and the merciful Tenderness of the Holy Spirit, nothing approaches the Power, the Wisdom and the merciful Tenderness of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*'

*O Most Blessed Mother, Heart of Love, Heart of Mercy,
ever listening, caring, consoling, hear our prayer.*

As your children, we implore your intercession with Jesus, your Son.

Receive with understanding and compassion the petitions we place before you today.

We are comforted in knowing your heart is ever open to those who ask for your prayer.

We trust to your gentle care and intercession,

those whom we love and who are sick or lonely or hurting.

Help all of us, Holy Mother, to bear our burdens in this life

until we may share eternal life and peace with God forever. Amen.

So let us join with Mary in our hearts filled with love for her, and her son, as we sing our hymn today

'Immaculate Mary, our hearts are on fire' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D3JbxV017k>

And perhaps we could all think about saying at least a decade of The Rosary in her honour this weekend – or even think about dropping into Church to say a decade to tomorrow afternoon because...

...tomorrow we will finally be opening up the Church for the first time in three months. As the hymn goes, '*O enter then his gates with praise, approach with joy his courts unto!*' The Church will be open from 1pm-4pm for private prayer and devotion. This means sadly there can be no prayers celebrated out loud, no public recitation of the Rosary, for example. Prayers sheets will be available for single use (though you may take them home), and you will be allowed to light candles, taking the light

from another lit candle, not using a taper or match. There will be stewards on hand, to ask you sanitize your hands as you enter and when you leave, and they will direct you to the seats, in the last few rows of the Church which have been earmarked for individuals. Upon leaving you will be asked to sanitize your hands once again, and the stewards will come forward to wipe down the place where you sat or knelt. Please keep socially distanced, which is still 2 metres (although that looks to change very soon). The toilets have to remain closed. Only twelve people will be allowed in the Church at any one time. If all goes well, and people feel there is a need for it, I will try and arrange a midweek opening too. Huge thanks to those who have volunteered to be stewards, and if anyone else is willing to go on the rota, stewarding for one hour on Sunday or Wednesday, please let myself or Eileen know. I will be pottering around throughout the three hours, and look forward to seeing you.

*Oh, may our hearts and minds be opened,
fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for everyone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.*

Some further good news is that shortly – from the middle of July - we will be able to have funeral services in Church. They will be like the services at the Crematorium, a very limited number of people, and not requiem Masses, but it is a step in the right direction. We have strict guidelines, and we can see what happens when that first need arises. Baby steps, I guess, but steps at least.

This morning I celebrated Mass for the Twelfth Sunday of the Year, and it will be available later on today on the YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNOe_G6n4AE&feature=youtu.be after it has been uploaded. The two hymns are ‘All People That On Earth Do Dwell’ and four verses of ‘Immaculate Mary.’ The official link for the Mass Sheet is

https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/uploads/www.rpbooks.co.uk/14_12inOrdinaryTimeA.pdf

The very-little-news-newsletter is attached, which enables you to see the Mass intentions, and the three funeral services I will be celebrating this week, and I also have added the prayers of intercession

And finally congratulations to former parishioner Veronica Worthington who today celebrates her 100th birthday, and is going to have a socially distanced party at her care home in Lytham, with a special videoed blessing from the Bishop. We all wish her many blessings, and here she is in the attached photo with her nephew Alex. Happy Birthday!

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). 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, though hopefully not for long. 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.