

Monday June 1st, Feast of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

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.

Today we have a new feast, so new it is not even in the recent editions of the Missals. It is another Feast celebrating Mary, and this time in her role as Mother of the Church. The Gospel for this feast comes from St. John 19:19:25-27:

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

John resents the Church being given Mary as our Mother, and we in turn can take our Blessed Mother Mary into our homes and our hearts, praying though her intercession to her Son for all our needs.

Mother, help our faith!

Open our ears to hear God's word and to recognize his voice and call.

Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps,

to go forth from our own land and to receive his promise.

Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith.

Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial,

beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature.

Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One.

Remind us that those who believe are never alone.

Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path.

And may this light of faith always increase in us,

until the dawn of that undying day which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!

And let today's hymn be 'Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly.' It's a lovely hymn, the first verse being about Mary, the second about Jesus, and the third a doxology, a final prayer for the Trinity. I always think there should be another verse about Joseph's role in the Holy Family of Nazareth. Perhaps I'll get around to writing one, or perhaps any poets out there could have a crack at it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ap6Hym_ERQM

I attach a picture of a statue I have that my parents bought me in Lourdes shortly after my ordination. I love the serenity of it, the very calm face of Mary, the slight smile on Jesus' face, and the way he puts his hands over his Mother's, knowing that everything is alright as long as she is with him.

More news about opening Churches; the Community Secretary Robert Jenrick has apparently been in talks with religious leaders about opening Churches. Obviously there is talk of social distancing, cordoning off areas, and so on, as well as having no singing. He said, *'We certainly don't want large gatherings in places of worship particularly because of the demographic in some faiths, because of singing hymns and so on, which can lead to exhalation, can create particular problems. I understand how important it is for millions of people in this country. I can understand how people of faith would consider it strange that shops, cafes, pubs, restaurants, many other settings, might be open in the weeks and months ahead, but not somewhere as important as a place of worship.'* read into all of that what you will. If by 'demographic' he means that only very old people go to Church he needs to come to St. Bernadette's on a Sunday Morning. And 'singing leads to exhalation'? Breathing leads to exhalation! I am deadly serious that if The Red Lion opens first I will approach them about holding a service there – which we may even be able to stream. As I said, we've done it before, so if we have to do it again we must!

I believe from today we are allowed to meet people in their gardens so I will try to get out and about a bit more and make a few calls. It will be lovely to see people again!

The Miraculous Medals proved very popular, so I have replenished the bowl if you would like to take some, and the Holy Spirit prayer cards are there, which depict the Holy Spirit window in St. Peter's Rome, which you are welcome to take for yourself, and friends and family. Most of the Holy Water bottles have gone, so I'll make sure I get some more there as soon as I can

Calling all our young people! Cadbury's Cream Eggs are now in the porch, sheltered from the sun opposite the R.I.P. board, and you are all welcome to take one. Don't forget, to take an egg, you have to place a picture of Tobias on the noticeboard above the basket of eggs. Put your name on it and there will be a prize for the one Tobias thinks is the best. The result will be announced next Sunday!

Many thanks to everyone who put offerings in the post box over the weekend, and those who continue to donate through standing order. Your continued financial support is much appreciated at this time.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Elizabeth Anne Finn, whose funeral I celebrated today at Carleton at 9am. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost. 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.

P.S. Don't forget to sign <https://citizengo.org/en-gb/rf/179408-open-our-churches-and-restore-worship>