

Wednesday July 1st, Wednesday in Week Thirteen in Ordinary Time, Year II

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 trust everyone continues to pray for all our needs at this time.

White Rabbits! Welcome to July as we start another month in this lockdown or semi-lockdown state. As another month begins, let us continue to pray that our whole situation will improve as the days go by.

We continue our week of reading the prophet Amos 5:14-15. 21-24. and his message is very New Testament today, despite being in the heart of the Original testament. *'Woe to those who do evil.'* Rather, Amos preaches, seek good and not evil, so that you may live, so that the Lord will be truly with you. Only then will your sacrifices and external prayers be of value. It's all very well offering prayers and sacrifices, but if our lives do not reflect them, then they are meaningless. *'Let your justice surge like water and your integrity like an unfailing stream.'* How relevant this is to our day!

In the Gospel, Matthew 8:28-34, we have a similar theme, and again, like yesterday, it's a kind of 'living parable.' It is the strange story of the demoniacs being cured and the devils ending up in the pigs - animals whose meat the Jews were forbidden to eat. We pray that evil may be uprooted from our hearts, and that goodness and love in our hearts will be reflected in our actions and prayers.

*Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.
O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations,
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.*

And today we have an Optional Memorial in England but a Feast Day in Ireland for St. Oliver Plunkett. Oliver was born into a Catholic family of nobility in Co. Meath, Ireland, in 1629. He went

on for the priesthood, studied in Rome in the Irish College and was ordained in 1654. He was unable to return to Ireland because of the political difficulties there, so he taught theology in Rome for twelve years. In 1669 he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh and was consecrated in Ghent. He had to return secretly to Ireland - most of the bishops had been expelled at the time. He worked very hard building up the Church and trying to correct abuses. During the 1670s there were further persecutions of the Catholics and eventually Oliver was arrested. He was tried for treason, first in Dublin and later in London. In 1681 he was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. His head was brought to Rome, and from there to Armagh, and eventually to Drogheda where since 29 June 1921 it has rested in Saint Peter's Church. Oliver Plunkett was beatified in 1920 and canonized in 1975, the first new Irish saint for almost seven hundred years, and the first of the Irish martyrs to be beatified. In 1997 Plunkett was made a patron saint for peace and reconciliation in Ireland. And this is the official Oliver Plunkett prayer for peace in Ireland:

*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 Irish 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.*

Do you say 'White Rabbits' on the first of the month? Saying 'White rabbits, white rabbits' to bring good luck was recorded as far back as 1909 in the 'Notes and Queries' book, a quarterly magazine about words, from 1909. The quote reads: 'My two daughters are in the habit of saying 'Rabbits!' on the first day of each month. The word must be spoken aloud, and be the first word said in the month. It brings luck for that month. Other children, I find, use the same formula.' Some say the phrase goes back as far as George Washington meeting Native Americans, and I believe that it was also a custom for RAF pilots to say it during the Second World War. A friend of mine and I always try to beat each other to be the first to text 'White Rabbits' to each other every first of the month. I won this month!

Please continue to pray for and remember our children, that one day we will all be able to come together again, celebrate our children's liturgy, have our family led first masses of the month, and look forward to a new generation of wonderful families at St. Bernadette's. In these days of not being able to come

together we all need to find new and creative ways to engage with our children in ways of the faith. A couple of days ago I actually filmed one of the 'minute morning prayer' videos, which presently go to our own school and Holy Family school, in Morrison's. Seriously, just by the pizza counter as I was buying my most favourite food. Firstly I wanted to point out to the children that you can pray absolutely anywhere, even in the supermarket. And so with the children, and the very bemused pizza lady, I said a pizza prayer.

*God our Father,
the pizza is round and goes on and on,
reminding me of the everlasting nature of your love.
The tomato sauce on the base ensures I get a taste of tomato in every bite,
reminding me that everything I do today must be filled with your love.
The different toppings,
remind me of the many different ways I can show your love to the world today.
Feed us with your love, O Lord. Amen.*

Apparently, after the video was shown in school one of the reception children asked 'Is that why he's called Father Pizza?' I can't attach the video (although it might be up on the school's website) but I do attach a photo.

I will give more details of our opening up for Mass in Friday's Message. Can we please have a meeting at 5pm in the Church this Thursday for all stewards and cleaners, and anyone who wants to come along and help. **So this Thursday in Church at 5pm**, we can have a proper rehearsal and try out and see what will work best? Please let Eileen or myself know if you can or can't come. Cheers.

Whatever you do today, make it a good day, and let's make it a good month. Masses will soon be beginning, so let's make that a great step in our world's covid rehabilitation.

Mass for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is available on the YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6N4h8PodpVA&feature=youtu.be>

The official link for the Mass Sheet is

<https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/uploads/www.rpbooks.co.uk/15SsPeterPaul.pdf>

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, most of the time. 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.