

Tuesday April 7<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday in Holy Week.

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's Gospel (John 13:21-33, 36-38) takes us to the Passover Supper which Jesus celebrated with his disciples. Here Jesus makes two prophecies; first of all that Judas is to be the one who betrays him, and secondly that Peter will deny that he knows Jesus three times before the cock crows. When the apostles ask Jesus who is to be betray him, Jesus replies 'It is the one to whom I give the piece of bread that I shall dip in the dish.' He then gives the bread to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. In Jewish tradition eating with people was always a sign of close friendship – which is why the Pharisees were often so incensed at Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. However the action of dipping your bread and handing it to someone was even more important. During the Passover meal the participants would make a sandwich of the bread (Matzo) and horseradish, then dip it in the wine, and you then hand it to someone you love to eat. During the Passover meal Jesus dipped the bread and handed it to Judas. Even though he knew exactly what Judas was going to do, he was still telling Judas he loved him. Even when we betray him, Jesus still loves us – thank heavens. That's the kind of Saviour and friend that Jesus is.

The naming in the Scripture of Judas' Father reminded me of a poem I heard long ago, and found again on the internet. It's called 'Two Mothers'.

*Two Mothers*

*Long time ago, so I have been told,*

*Two angels once met on streets paved with gold.*

*"By the stars in your crown," said the one to the other*

*"I see that on earth, you too, were a mother.*

*And by, the blue-tinted halo you wear*

*You, too, have known sorrow and deepest despair..."*

*"Ah yes," she replied, "I once had a son,*

*A sweet little lad, full of laughter and fun."*

*“But tell of your child.” “Oh, I knew I was blessed  
From the moment I first held him close to my breast,  
And my heart almost burst with the joy of that day.”  
“Ah, yes,” said the other, “I felt the same way.”*

*The former continued: “The first steps he took-  
So eager and breathless; the sweet startled look  
Which came over his face – he trusted me so.”  
“Ah, yes,” said the other, “How well do I know”*

*“But soon he had grown to a tall handsome boy,  
So stalwart and kind – and it gave me so much joy  
To have him just walk down the street by my side”  
“Ah yes, “said the other mother, “I felt the same pride.”*

*“How often I shielded and spared him from pain  
And when he for others was so cruelly slain,  
When they crucified him – and they spat in his face  
How gladly would I have hung there in his place!”*

*A moment of silence – “Oh then you are she –  
The mother of Christ”; and she fell on one knee.  
But the Blessed one raised her up, drawing her near,  
And kissed from the cheek of the woman, a tear.*

*“Tell me the name of the son you love so,  
That I may share with your grief and your woe.”  
She lifted her eyes, looking straight at the other,  
“He was Judas Iscariot: I am his mother.”*

Author Unknown

Perhaps we could offer up a prayer for all Parents whose children have gone to God before them. *Most Blessed Mary, Virgin and Mother; you understand the pain of losing a child. You experienced that terror when Christ was left alone at the temple. You experienced anguish when the “sword pierced your own soul” as well. Pray for parents, who have lost their beloved child, that through your intercessions, they may share in the joy you experienced at the resurrection. Amen.*

And I would ask you to pray the *Eternal Rest* for Jerzy Mansfield, whose funeral I celebrated this morning at 8:30am at Carleton. *Requiescat in pace.*

I had an email from a Parishioner yesterday who was saying that people are becoming more sombre as time goes on, but also mentioned all the different ways we are communicating with each other when we can't be with each other physically. From emails, WhatsApp Groups, Facebooks, Twitter and all sorts of things I have absolutely no clue about, as well as simply picking up the phone. I have noticed when on my healthy exercise walk that many people are displaying messages in their windows, not least to support the NHS. The important thing is that we do all stay in touch, and do everything we can to keep each other's spirits up however we can. And who knows, you may even see me and Tobias on WhatsApp or Facebook soon.

Don't forget as it's Tuesday it would be great if at 7pm tonight we could all come together spiritually to pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary. One person has suggested you have a Rosary Ring: you phone someone and say a decade of the Rosary, then they phone someone else to say the next decade. Some of you have been saying that you are saying more prayers than ever at this time. Perhaps when all this is over we can keep this up.

In other news, talking about different ways of communicating, I couldn't find my iPad the other day. It turns out that during lockdown Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, had been 'borrowing' it and trying his paw at Online Dating. He seems to have got the hang of it, as you might see in the attachment...

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.