

Thursday May 7th, Thursday in the Fifth Week of Eastertide

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.

I'm afraid today's message will be a little shorter, as it is a very busy morning. I've already celebrated one funeral service at Carleton at 8:30pm, and I'm being picked up at 11am to go down to Lytham for a service at 12noon, after which I have lunch in school. So here goes.

For the rest of the Easter season we will be reading extracts from the Lord's discourse to the Apostles at the Last Supper - we could regard this as his last will and testament. In today's Gospel (John 13:16-20) Jesus says *'Whoever welcomes the one I send welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me.'* I've always found this a hugely important teaching with regards to callers at the door of the presbytery. As you may know, my sitting room in the presbytery is upstairs, so if the door goes I have to trek down to answer it. And as you know, I also enjoy watching TV and it's extraordinary how many people time their call at the door at ten to the hour, just as I'm watching the last round of *Tipping Point*, the Final Chase on *The Chase*, or the big reveal of the renovated property on *Buying and Selling with The Property Brothers*. (I've just realised how sad that makes me sound...). So if I come down stairs a bit of grump, I always remind myself that it is Jesus at the door. In fact if I'm in an especially grumpy mood, I do what an old priest once told me to do, and genuflect at the Jesus in the person before I open the door. It may be a guy wanting a bag of food, it may be a chancer wanting the bus fare to Glasgow for his mother's funeral. But I have to welcome those people as though it were Jesus, and indeed, in a sense, each of those people *is* Jesus, sent to me for a purpose. And sometimes that purpose it to make me realise that I am blessed to be able to serve such people – and blessed to have a Parish which enables me to do so. Please pray for all callers at the door of the presbytery – and please pray for me that I may open the door with a spirit of love and charity.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,

I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20)

Loving Lord Jesus,

I humbly invite You into my life. Come and dwell in my heart.

Let your presence be with me and protect me.

Let your grace and favour be upon my life.

Enable me to live virtuously that I may draw people towards You.

May your divine love flow through me into their lives.

Make me a channel of blessings to them.

Through the same Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Let today's hymn be 'O Let All Who Thirst, Let them Come To the Water', and let all in need, let them come to our doors the world over, to be welcomed as we would welcome our Blessed Lord.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huERPUnO-bo>

Many thanks for people who responded to my request for knowledge about recording and uploading and whatever about an internet Mass. I'm on to it, and hopefully by Sunday morning I will be able to direct you to a Facebook page which will have me celebrating mass in Church. Fingers crossed and a few prayers for the intercession of our good old friend St. Isidore would be very welcome.

As there is no time today for a big long story about, for example, mates who have had too many G&Ts to write their own sermons, I just thought I'd give you a few random thoughts and jottings which have occurred to me throughout this time of pandemic:

Why did I use to wake up in the morning and make my first words 'Thank you Lord Jesus for bringing me to the start of a brand new day' whereas now I wake up and my first words are 'Alexa, what *day* is it???'

Why now, when I pass a shop without a queue outside do I think 'Oooh, I must pop in,' even though I don't actually want or need anything?

Had anyone ever heard of the word 'furlough' before all this malarkey started?

How come I now say 'I've *only* got four funerals next week' 'Only???'

What am I supposed to do when an Undertaker rings up and says 'Can you do a funeral next week? They've asked for a Catholic Priest, but they don't want anything religious'?

And what am I supposed to think when they add '...so we thought of you'?

And finally, chatting with the girls behind the curtains at the Crematorium this morning, one of them said 'I always say, no matter whether you think your glass is half full or half empty, always remember that you can always refill it.' To which the other replied, 'What if you don't have a glass?'

Don't forget to clap for the NHS and all our key workers at 8pm this evening, and before we do so, in this month of May, it could be a nice idea for us all to pray the rosary from 7:30pm for the intentions of all those who are going out to work and serving us during these times.

And a big Happy Birthday to Eileen! Many happy returns and thanks for all she does around the house and the Church!

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Kenneth Earl, whose funeral I celebrated at Carleton at 8:30am this morning, and Anneliese Lewis, whose funeral I will be celebrating at Lytham at 12noon.
May they both rest in the peace and love of Christ.

And finally, in other news, I'm not sure if in the attached picture Tobias, the Presbytery Cat is saying 'Mmmmm, I love being tickled under the chin.' or 'Oh, if you insist, I will allow you to tickle me under the chin as I know you like it.'

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.