

Wednesday April 8<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 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, Wednesday of Holy Week, is also known as Spy Wednesday, as today's Gospel tells us of Judas' betrayal of Jesus, Matthew 26:14-25, '*One of the twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.*' Perhaps today we should take the opportunity to contemplate our own betrayals of the Lord, and perhaps especially the times we have betrayed Him when judging others. Parishioner Paul Littler has been sending me some pictures of beautiful stained glass from Churches around the British Isles that he has taken on his travels, and I attach a beautiful one of Peter Denying Christ. It's not an image that is often depicted, and on the day we recall Judas betraying Christ, we should also remember the actions and inactions of the other Apostles, save for John, the youngest, who stayed with Christ throughout the whole of his passion. Let's make sure we are awake with Christ and with him during Passiontide this year.

And here is a poem I found entitled '*Thirty Pieces of Silver*'

*Store up treasures in Heaven  
while here on earth below.  
For wherein lies our treasure  
there is our heart also.*

*Let us not be blinded  
by the world and led astray  
like Judas, the disciple,  
who, for silver, did betray.*

*By choosing silver over Christ,  
poor Judas foolishly  
betrayed his Lord with a kiss*

*and sealed his destiny.*

*Many, as did Judas  
learn that greed comes with a price  
when one's great love of money  
exceeds their love for Christ.*

*Such greed will but destroy  
the soul and cause lament  
like the thirty silver pieces  
that Judas never spent.*

The prayer of blessing over the people at the end of today's mass gained a new appropriateness for me in these times:

*Grant your faithful O Lord, we pray  
to partake unceasingly of the paschal mysteries  
and to await with longing the gifts to come.  
that, persevering in the Sacraments of their rebirth,  
they may be led by Lenten works to newness of life.  
Though Christ our Lord. Amen*

As written the phrase 'gifts to come' obviously refers to future life eternal in heaven. But what are the 'gifts to come' that we are praying for at the moment?

The gift of being able to hug people again.

The gift to be able to go out of our homes and meet and chit chat.

The gift of not being isolated.

And the gift of being able to come together as the community of St. Bernadette's.

That last 'gift' of community was spelled out to me clearly this morning as I celebrated a funeral at the Crematorium for a man called Roy, with the only people there being myself and a Wyre Borough Official. As you know, previously if I've had a funeral like this I ask people from the Parish to come. The first time asked I promised anyone who came a coffee at the 'Café at the Crem' - and it was sixty-five quid well spent, with so many of you turning up for someone who we knew nothing about at all. I remember that it moved the undertaker to tears that so many people arrived, including Kath Pickup, our esteemed Choir Mistress, to give us her beautiful 'May the Angels Lead You'. The second time it happened, and again a big crowd of you arrived, the undertaker presumed everyone was for the *next* funeral, as she wasn't expecting anybody to there. In the end the deceased's long lost brother from Australia turned up – and was visibly moved that so many people should have come along. Before he

returned to Australia he came to the presbytery to thank me again and make a donation to the Parish. But alas, today, it was just the two of us, and I don't think I've celebrated a sadder funeral. It really demonstrates why we have a community of St. Bernadette's, to pray together and serve God and his Church the best we can. **Together**. Please say the Eternal Rest for Mr. Edward Tyler, known as Roy.

And to lift our spirits after that lets join together with a rousing 'Shine, Jesus, Shine'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3iB30gCqAc> and feel free to add your own percussion!

And I also attach a photo of last night's full moon. 'Why?' I hear you cry. Well, this full moon is also known as the Paschal, or Easter full moon, as it is this moon which determines the changing date of Easter. The date of Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which this year was March 20<sup>th</sup> (at 3:49am to be exact). So last night's full moon gives us this Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> as our day to celebrate Easter. There you go.

Finally, a friend has recommended <https://radiomariaengland.uk/> which has beautiful prayers and masses throughout the day.

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.