

Saturday May 9th, Saturday 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.

As we continue our reading of the Acts of the Apostles you may remember that at the beginning of Eastertide I said it was a book of the Bible that it is great to sit down and read in one go, as it reads like an exciting Boys Own adventure story of a Church growing and moving, and overcoming all sorts of obstacles, but ultimately triumphant in its journey to Rome. Today's Reading (Acts 13:44-52) certainly conveys that sense of adventure, danger, and courage as Paul and Barnabas continue their missionary journey. As the two intrepid disciples are expelled from *Antioch* 'they shook the dust from the feet in defiance.' It's worth remembering that at that time 'shaking the dust from your feet,' meant 'no worries, we'll forget this ever happened,' meaning that there is always the opportunity of returning to the place and preaching again with no ill feeling, and perhaps with even more determination for people to understand and take on board the message that is being preached.

In this morning's Gospel (John 14:7-14) Jesus invites us to pray. There are many times Jesus calls us to speak to his Father with all our needs, 'Ask and you will receive,' as well as giving us the pattern of all prayer when he teaches us the 'Our Father' in which we praise the Father, acknowledge our humility before him, and seek material and spiritual needs, not least his forgiveness, which we also pledge to go on to offer to others. Today he tells us, '*Whatever you ask for in my I will do, so that the Father may be gloried in the Son. If you ask or anything in my name, I will do it.*' Jesus is encouraging us to pray, the very act of engaging in a relationship with the Almighty itself being an act of glory towards the Father. Let's not fail to take up such a glorious invitation!

Lord, I bow my heart before You and give You honour and praise.

Oh God, strengthen my prayer life.

Help me to pray more.

Nudge me to pray when I'm doing mindless tasks

Help me to truly know who I am in Christ,

to understand that You always hear me,

to know Your Word so I can pray it,

to write down my own prayer needs and the needs of others,

and to know that You really do know me.

Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

And let's all sing together 'Seek Ye First', which tells us to 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1Y8Naj3RFk>

In an hour or so's time I will be going into Church to video a Mass for this Sunday, which will then, hopefully, be uploaded to the YouTube, after which I will be able to send you all a link to the Mass, so that you can join me this weekend and throughout the week. Hopefully I'll be able to send you the link early this afternoon. Huge thanks to Ian for helping me set up the equipment. Actually, huge thanks to Ian for setting up the equipment – I was no help whatsoever. It's all very high tech as you can see in the attached picture. If you really want to join in, there'll also be two hymns: *Amazing Grace* to beginning with, and concluding with *Hail, Queen of Heaven*. I understand that the video will be there for one week, to be replaced by next Sunday's mass, if all goes well. I'd also like to record a holy hour, praying the Rosary and Benediction, but I don't want to push my luck. I'll see how this goes first.

Yesterday afternoon I joined the residents of Denebank opposite the presbytery for a social distanced celebratory drink for VE day. It was lovely catching up with them, and to hear their memories of VE Day, which included one of the chaps being on a boat to the Far East to free the inmates of the prison camps. Extraordinary people with extraordinary stories, and it was an honour to be in their company. And, yes, we did give a stirring rendition of 'We'll Meet Again,' singing along to Vera Lynn! I attach the pic – you can see how well we observed social distancing! I also saw a few other social distanced street parties as I did my healthy exercise walk, and it was an absolute tonic to see happy, smiling faces. Let's keep that spirit up over the next few weeks, as we may see a slight lifting of lockdown and the possibility of limited services in Church.

The words of the Queen's speech yesterday evening were hauntingly beautiful, I thought, *'Today it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish. Instead we remember from our homes and our doorsteps. But our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other.'* If you replace the word 'streets' with 'churches' it may help us to continue through this time of crisis, and emerge ever more united and faith filled. Certainly, whenever I am in Church praying the Mass or saying my Divine Office, I don't feel alone. The love of our community strengthens everything we are doing at this time, and love never comes to an end. Let us remember, to paraphrase Her Majesty, *'St Bernadette's is not empty; it is filled with the love and care that we have for each other.'* Amen to that.

I attach all the texts for this Sunday's Mass, as well as the Bidding Prayers and the Newsletter, which, again, doesn't have a lot of news, but does have the mass intentions for this week, as well as the four

funeral services I'll be taking. Please continue to pray for the deceased and the bereaved at this difficult time.

And now I'd better totter off and trim my beard to get ready for my video debut. Look out for the link which hopefully I'll send you early this afternoon. Here goes...

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.