

Friday April 10th, Good Friday.

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.

Well yesterday was a very different Maundy Thursday, with a simple mass in the evening in Church, and night prayer at ten. And today, Good Friday, there will be a simple passion service in Church at three, as I read the Gospel, prayer the great intercessions, the long bidding prayers, and finally receive the Eucharist. I hope that you will join me spiritually at three in prayer, perhaps following one of the many streamed services on the internet and digital radio. I attach a scaled down passion service which you may like to pray with your family.

Speaking of the Prayers of Intercession, the Bishops have added a special one for these times, which I'd ask you to pray:

Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

*Almighty ever-living God,
only support of our human weakness,
look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children
who suffer because of this pandemic;
relieve the pain of the sick,
give strength to those who care for them,
welcome into your peace those who have died
and, throughout this time of tribulation,
grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.
Through Christ our Lord.*

As I speak to people about the crisis at this time, a lot of people are asking 'what can you do?', 'what can I do to help?' It's a question I asked in a Good Friday sermon:

What can you do? Christ hangs upon the cross, slaughtered. What can you do? Oh, if it was Palm Sunday you could wave our palms and greet our King with cries of Hosanna, Blessed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord. If it were Maundy Thursday you could allow our Lord to serve you, washing your feet; you could receive his body and blood as your strength, your nourishment.

But what can you do now?

If you are Simon of Cyrene you can take up the cross and follow him, lightening his burden, as the burden he gave to you was so light.

If you are Veronica you can wipe his face, refreshing him as you were refreshed in the waters of baptism.

If you are his Mother or the disciple he loved, carry out his dying wishes; give yourself to one another and live for him who dies for you.

If you are crucified with him as a robber, you can acknowledge God. If he hangs on the cross because of your sins, you can receive forgiveness through him. You can adore him who hangs on the cross beside you, and whilst he is hanging there draw some advantage by his death, entering into paradise with Jesus, contemplating the glories there.

If you are Joseph of Arimathea you can ask the executioners for his body; give him your tomb, that you and the world might never fear the grave.

If you are Nicodemus, the man who served God by night, prepare him for burial with perfumes, that the scent of death will never touch us again.

If you are one or other Mary, or Salome or Joanna, shed tears in the early morning. Be the first to see the stone removed, and perhaps the angels too, even Jesus himself.

What can you do? Christ hangs upon the cross, slaughtered. What can you do? You cannot leave him alone, without help or succour or support. You must find his will for you. If we do not find the cross, we might never find the resurrection.

Let us pray that we will find his will for each and every one of us at this time. And let today's hymn be the beautiful 'My Song Is Love Unknown' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMart4wXsI0>

Our school is still open throughout the Bank Holidays and the Easter Holidays, and we are grateful that our teachers are doing such a great job looking after the children of key workers. It's also a good idea to look at our school website where, as well as work for the children to do at home, there are some great pictures of what the children have been up to, as well as a dedicated faith page, with lots of prayers and activities for this holy season. I will be going into school this afternoon to celebrate the Stations of the Cross with the children, and yesterday I actually found myself delivering school dinners! What can you do? Mrs. Satterthwaite found me a job!

Once again it was great to go out last night at eight to serenade the NHS workers and all front line workers and carers. I actually sat in my car and beeped the horn for a minute. It was great to see

everyone at the doors, especially all the people from Denebank opposite the presbytery cheering and waving.

In your prayers, please pray the *Eternal Rest* for the repose of the souls of Parish family and friends Joyce Thompson and Roseline Cowdell, whose funerals I will be celebrating later this morning. And please pray for their families too. *Requiescat in pace.*

May God bless you all on this most solemn and special of days. After the darkness of Good Friday came the light of Easter Sunday. Let us look through these dark times to future joy.

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.