

Monday May 11th, Monday On 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.

Firstly, can I ask your prayers for Bishop Paul. As you may have heard Bishop Swarbrick was injured while exercising on his bike near Morecambe. He was admitted to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary that afternoon and diagnosed with a fractured skull and with damage to his left ear. Yesterday he was discharged so that he could continue his recovery at home. He would appreciate your prayers.

*Heavenly Father,
in these trying times
when the spirit of the age
threatens Christian values,
give our bishop health and strength,
and holiness of life
and wisdom to direct and guide our diocesan family
so that we may grow in your love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

In the first reading from today's Mass (Acts 14:5-18) Paul and Barnabas moved to Iconium and Lyconia and there they cured a man whose feet had been crippled since birth. As a result many of the people thought they were gods. Paul tried to get them to turn from their many pagan gods to the one living God. It's a little reminder that whatever we do for God and his Church we should do for the glory of His name and not for our personal gratification or glorification, although it is not wrong to find working for God immensely gratifying!

And as Jesus continues his great discourse at the Last Supper, as recorded in the Gospel of St. John (John 14:21-26) Jesus reminds his disciples that the condition for loving him and thus being loved by his Father is to keep his Commandments – and his primary commandment is to love one another. And then for the first time, Jesus promises the disciples the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to teach them all things. An Advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of someone, and if ever we are in the position of having to defend our faith, or our actions brought about by our love of the Godhead, we should seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to know what to say and how to act. In less than two weeks we

will be celebrating Pentecost, the fiftieth day of Eastertide when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and in the readings leading up to the great feast Jesus will talk more about the Holy Spirit, and prepare us for that great feast, the birthday of the Church.

*Lord, you have enriched me
with the strength of your word.
You have opened my mind and heart
to see the wonders you have created.
You have blessed me with the gift of communication
to share your divine message.
Holy Spirit, help me to understand
the power of these gifts,
and teach me to use them wisely.
Bless all who use their talents
to communicate the Gospel.
Guide those who work
in the field of communications
to use their power for the good of your people.
This I ask through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.*

It was so heart-warming to read all your emails with regard to the Mass that was recorded on Sunday, and I'm so pleased that things all came together and we were at last able to record. Your love for the Mass and for St. Bernadette's was truly palpable in your responses. Once again, incredible thanks to Ian (working for us in the field of communications) for managing to record it and get it on the YouTube. Despite slight lifting of lockdown restrictions, the likelihood is that Churches will be closed for quite a while longer, so we will continue to reach out to you via the Sunday Mass, and Feast Days, and hopefully with a Holy Half Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

Just to reply generally to a couple of queries. Firstly, many thanks to the people who are making offerings by standing order, and to those people who continue to put their Sunday envelopes in the letter box at the presbytery. The box is checked very regularly – every time I answer the door, or go in and out, and is immediately emptied if there is anything inside it. The money is being banked, but only once a month, due to lockdown restrictions. The '£0' collection on the newsletter is a bit of a joke as it refers to what I've collected at Mass, and as it's only me, there's not a lot. And to the sweet old lady who was very worried to hear that every morning I wake up and say 'Alexa, what day is it?', just to point out that 'Alexa' is an electronic gizmo, like a radio that talks back to you, and answers any questions you put to it. Just to clear up *any* confusion.

A number of you have asked again about my family in Hong Kong and Australia, and all seems well with them all. In Australia it was Mother's Day yesterday, and as you can see in the attached picture, the family enjoyed what looks like an amazing array of sushi at their celebration meal. And as lockdown restrictions are being slowly lifted in Hong Kong, my brother was finally able to have a haircut – with some modifications...!

And finally, please pray for the repose of the soul of Gloria Page, whose funeral I celebrated at Carleton this morning at 8:30am. *May her soul be welcomed into the arms of our Blessed Lord.*

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.

P.S. I attach Sunday's Newsletter again, as some people didn't receive it. Again, there's not a lot of news, but you can follow the Mass intentions that I am praying each day.