

Sunday April 12th, Easter Saturday.

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. I know it's a glorious Easter Weekend (although today is much chillier than yesterday), but please, unless for necessities and exercise, please stay home and stay safe.

And I hope everyone is praying together for our all our intentions in this time of need.

First of all I wish you all the happiest and blessed Easter you could possibly have given our dreadful circumstances at this time. Let us thank God for the blessing of the Resurrection of his son Jesus, and the opening up to Heaven to which Easter Sunday invites us all.

*May Almighty God bless you through today's Easter Solemnity,
and, in his compassion, defend you from every assault of sickness and disease. **Amen.***

*And may he who restores you to eternal life in the Resurrection of his Only Begotten,
endow you with the prize of immortality. **Amen.***

*Now that the days of the Lord's Passion have drawn to a close,
may you who celebrate the gladness of the Paschal Feast,
come with Christ's help, and exulting in Spirit
to those Feasts that are celebrated in eternal joy. **Amen.***

*And may the blessing of almighty God
+ the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down upon you, and remain with you forever.*

Amen.

Let's all join in with a resounding 'Christ the Lord is Risen Today', in a particularly fine and joyful version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFjnlBn0K10>

On a 'normal' Easter Sunday newsletter I would always give a copious list of thanks to everyone who has helped us celebrate Lent and Easter, but, although we haven't been able to come together to celebrate Passiontide and Eastertide, today, through this message I would like to thank everyone who makes St. Bernadette's a thriving Catholic community;

The MCs and altar servers, who add so much to our services by their organization and their presence, making sure I am always on the right page, and giving service at the altar of God. And rest assured, I have your Easter chocolate here, and look forward to you being able to get it,

The sacristans who thoughtfully and prayerfully prepare the sanctuary for each mass for us, and keep the sacristy and our services running smoothly,

The readers and ministers, who proclaim the Word of God, and minister the Blessed Sacrament to us, honouring the Word and the Eucharist in their ministry,

The choir and organist, who raise our hearts and minds to God, sharing their God-given gifts of music with his Church, beautifying our services with their song,

The flower arrangers, who use their time and talent to make the Church so beautiful, adding light and colour to the beauty of the liturgy,

To the welcomers, the collectors, and those who organise the offertory procession, making sure that all parts of the liturgy and the service are attended to,

To our teachers, catechists, children's' liturgists, and our parents, who work tirelessly to pass on the light of faith to the young members of our community,

To St. Bernadette's School, and our teachers and governors, which make the School such an integrated part of our community,

To our very special children, who lighten and delight our liturgies by the presence and their enthusiasm. Please note that I have 120 Cadbury's Cream Eggs waiting to be handed out to you

To our refreshment makers, the Social Committee and all who help providing social events throughout the year, including the 200 Club, and other groups in the Parish, such as the SVP Coffee Morning group, the Bowlers and St. Bernadette's Players, all of which help to draw us together in different ways, and enhance and refresh our community,

To our Church Cleaners, who keep the Church a fitting place for the worship of the Lord, to our gardeners and grounds people, who make St. Bernadette's such a peaceful and beautiful place to visit, to those who raise the flag;

To our truly amazing SVP, Help the Hungry, those who bring food on Food Sunday, to the Bereavement Group who serve those who have lost loved ones, and all who seek to help those in need in our parish, in the wider community and in the world,

And to those who keep the house, the Parish Office, and finances running so well throughout the year,

And to any one I have failed to mention (forgive me!),

And to everyone who comes into St. Bernadette's to say a prayer throughout the year and truly make St. Bernadette's a faith-filled community bathed in Paschal Candle Light.

We may be apart, but spiritually together, and we look forward to the day when we can all take up our roles again, revitalised and renewed, and grateful that we can give service to the God who gave up his Son for us on the Cross, and raised him from the dead on that first, glorious Easter Sunday.

Please have a thought and a prayer for Tracey, who yesterday evening at the Easter Vigil should have been received into the Church, with her husband Damien as her sponsor, accompanied by their catechist, Anita. Tracey was presented to the Bishop at the Rite of Election just six short weeks ago on the First Sunday of Lent, and no one had any inkling at all that our Churches would be closed by Easter Sunday. We look forward to her full reception into the Church as soon as possible. So too please pray for Pam and Peter who should have been celebrating their wedding this afternoon here at St. Bernadette's. We look forward to celebrating their nuptials whenever we can, as too the baptism of baby Aurora which should have taken place tomorrow morning. Let's all look forward to the day when we can celebrate the Sacraments again **together** – and perhaps we will all appreciate them a little more after our enforced separation.

Several people have emailed informing me of an Andrea Bocelli concert which is to be performed in the empty Duomo, the Cathedral in Milan, this evening at 6pm UK time and streamed live on YouTube. Bocelli describes it as not so much a concert but a time for us all to come to prayer through God's gift of music. Among the pieces that Bocelli is going to perform, Bach's "Ave Maria", Rossini's "Domine Deus" and "Amazing Grace". It's called 'A Concert of Hope.' and sounds like something with could all do with at this time.

I can't resist introducing you to a favourite Christian American singer of mine called Sandy Patty. I first heard her music at a concert in Rome many, many years ago, and she does sing truly Christian music, and her televised Christmas concerts are an American staple. There are various songs on YouTube and you might enjoy her hugely orchestrated version of 'How Great Thou Art,' which starts fairly loud and just gets, well, louder. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTtSTOIO7To> If we sing along, I guess only Kath Pickup will be able to get the high notes.

Can I also say a personal thanks for the kind cards, and Easter offerings which have reached me, and your emails and thoughts. It's a real blessing and comfort at this time.

I attach four pictures with this mail; the Sanctuary at Quaranta' Ore last year, bursting with flowers and candles, how it would have looked this morning; two images of the resurrection, one in stained glass from Paul, and one knitted from Eileen; and a picture of Tobias, who, judging by the look on his face, certainly was not intending to share his Easter Egg.

Make it a Blessed Easter.

With love and faith in Jesus.

Fr. P.