

Tuesday May 12<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday of 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.

Was anyone woken up by the rain this morning? It was pounding down at around 6am. At least it seems to have cleared up – queueing in the rain to get into Morrisons is no-one's idea of fun!

Once again the Scripture take on a meaning especial to these times. In this morning's reading from the Acts of the Apostles (14:19-28) the Jews, who were angry with Paul in the cities he had already visited, now tried to stone him. So Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch, encouraging their people to remain firm in their faith. *'We all have to experience many hardships' they said, 'before we enter the kingdom of God.'* Similarly, in the Gospel (John 14-27-31) Jesus bequeaths a special peace to his disciples - one the world cannot give. So they must not let their hearts be troubled. He is not going to desert them but go to his Father. Do we feel troubled or afraid? Are we in need of fresh heart? All of us are at the moment 'experiencing many hardships' whether it is being prevented from doing the things we want to do, or feeling pressurised into going to work in an environment where we don't feel safe. Jesus promises us, *'my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.'* Once again, it's a call for us in this time of pandemic to pray for faith and perseverance. In our prayer today we can ask the Lord to pour his peace into our hearts, refreshing them and easing any anxiety or fear:

*My God, You are faithful and just in all that You do.*

*Your Word is true. Your promises are unbreakable. Your Work is trustworthy.*

*Help my heart keep and foster these truth*

*that I may confidently persevere through my struggles  
with strength from Your promises and assurances.*

*Steer me away from my doubts and my tendency to impatiently take charge of things.*

*Keep me from relying on mere human understanding and capabilities.*

*Teach me to focus on You and find full confidence in You. Amen.*

So today, basking in the peace that Christ gives us, let us sing 'Peace, Perfect Peace.'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= DWa8oWu1nQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWa8oWu1nQ)

Today is also the memorial of St. Pancras – one of the patron Saints of children, due to the fact that he was martyred, beheaded actually, for converting to Christianity at the age of fourteen at the beginning of the fourth century. Pope Gregory the First, Gregory the Great, had great devotion to St. Pancras, so when he sent St. Augustine of Canterbury to first preach Christianity to England in the middle of the sixth century one of the first Churches he founded in London he dedicated to St. Pancras, given its name to that area of London, and subsequently, of course, to the Railway Station. As well as one of the Patron Saints of children, he is also the Patron Saint of Jobs, and finding work. Apparently this is due to the fact that in Italy it is a common practice to have a statue of St. Pancras in your place of work (possibly because he is often depicted holding a coin). In these uncertain times, let us pray for all who have to seek new ways of employment though the intercession of today's Saint.

*St. Pancras, we turn to you seeking your help and guidance and your intercession  
for all who look for suitable employment,  
who need your wisdom to guide their footsteps along the right path,  
and to lead them to find the proper things to say and do in this quest.  
They wish to use the gifts and talents God has given them,  
but need the opportunity to do so with gainful employment.  
Do not abandon them in this search but rather grant them this favour  
so they may have earthly success to support themselves and their families  
Amen.*

My sister in Australia was really chuffed to get her picture on this message. She emailed me saying 'Yaaaaaaaay! We finally get the guernsey.' I didn't have a clue what she meant so googled 'get the guernsey'. Apparently it is an Australian phrase. In Australia a 'guernsey' is a type of shirt commonly worn by football players, so to 'get the guernsey' is to be selected to play, but has passed into common parlance meaning to achieve praise or recognition for something. I'll have to start using that, much as we now use the word 'furlough.' You'll remember that a week or so ago I wondered if anyone had used the word 'furlough' before this coronavirus mess? Well, a parishioner helpfully emailed me to say, 'When I was in the R.A.F. in the early to late fifties, furlough meant going on leave (leave of absence).' So there you go. Every day's a school day, as they say!

One of our volunteer Gardening team was around tending and planting on Sunday and afterwards emailed me, 'You mentioned the need during these times to keep our faith and spirits uplifted. Well when I was in the church grounds yesterday doing some gardening I was really uplifted by the wonderful site of the Grotto and especially all the lovely clematis flowers overhanging Our Lady's statue. I've never seen them look as good as this before. Any chance of taking a photo of it and attaching it to your next e-mail for all other parishioners to see? I think it would really help to give them a lift especially those who cannot get to the church because of the lock-down.' And that's just

what I have done, and it certainly is an uplifting site to behold. Huge thanks to all our volunteer gardeners who keep the grounds looking beautiful – perhaps after lockdown we might have a few more volunteers? All help always welcome!

And finally let's all say a big 'Happy Birthday' to Jenny Morris who today is celebrating her birthday – although I'd better not say which one. Suffice to say she does *not* look it! Many happy returns to you!!!

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.