

Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>, Memorial of St. Anthony of Padua

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 trust we are all praying for each other's needs at this very strange time.

In today's first reading from 1 Kings 19:19-21 the prophet Elijah picks Elisha as his successor. Elisha then turns his back on his past work as a cattle labourer and follows him. Later, after a long period of training, he is to take over from Elijah. He consecrates him by throwing his mantle over him, a forerunner of the laying on of hands by which the Apostles consecrated new disciples and priests, and a forerunner of how the Bishop and priests of the diocese laid their hands on me when I was ordained. Whilst in the Gospel, Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus gives another positive interpretation of the law. 'You have heard it said... but I say to you.' There is no need to swear an oath to the truth if you are truly sincere - a 'yes' should mean 'yes' and a 'no' should mean 'no'.

*Jesus, Prince of all Heavenly truths,  
Your Words are carved for eternity!  
You have commanded the virtue of honesty,  
It is the power against all deceptions.  
Direct Your Spirit of honesty upon me,  
That my soul may always remain stainless.  
Guide my daily thoughts, words and actions,  
To join those living by the Spirit of truth  
For honesty yields harmony and loyalty,  
Enriching all human relationships.  
By the power of Your Spirit that flourishes,  
Let honesty will prevail in this world!  
Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

And today is the Memorial of St. Anthony of Padua. Anthony was originally named Ferdinand was born in to a wealthy family in Lisbon, Portugal in 1195. He first joined the Augustinian Order and became a priest, before joining the Franciscans, changing his name to Anthony. He had wished to preach to the Muslims and be martyred, but on his way to Morocco, he became seriously ill and was forced to return home. However, his ship back to Portugal was blown off course and eventually landed in Sicily. Because of his continuing poor health, he was not allowed to pursue his missionary

work and instead taught theology at Bologna, Italy, and at Montpellier, Toulouse, and Puy-en-Velay in Southern France, winning great admiration as a preacher. Anthony was a very learned man and was much inspired by a visit to Assisi where he met St Francis. He became famous for his preaching in Italy and especially in Padua, where he lived for his last few years. He was only thirty-six when he died, and was canonised just a year after his death.

You will know St. Anthony as a good friend to many of us as he is Patron Saint of finding Lost Things. The reason for this is traced to an incident that occurred in Bologna. According to the story, Anthony had a book of psalms that was of some importance to him, as it contained the notes and comments he had made to use in teaching his students. A novice who had decided to leave took the psalter with him. Upon noticing it was missing, Anthony prayed it would be found or returned. As the thief was running away he had a vision of a big monster and, terrified, ran back to the monastery, giving the book back to Anthony. The stolen book is still in the Franciscan friary in Bologna. I refer to St. Anthony as Patron Saint of my car keys, as I'm always losing them, and he always makes them turn up.

*St. Anthony, perfect imitator of Jesus,  
who received from God the special power of restoring lost things,  
grant that I may find (name the item) which has been lost.  
At least restore to me peace and tranquillity of mind,  
the loss of which has afflicted me even more than my material loss.  
To this favour, I ask another of you:  
that I may always remain in possession of the true good that is God.  
Let me rather lose all things than lose God, my supreme good.  
Let me never suffer the loss of my greatest treasure, eternal life with God.  
Amen.*

And to demonstrate that I am always losing my car keys, I attach a picture of my spare car key and it's huge key ring!

Another little piece of Good News. I have been offered another smaller statue of St. Bernadette to be placed in the grotto behind the Church (you wait for ages for a statue and then two turn up at once – somebody had to say it). It is identical, except in size, to the one we will be getting for the children's memorial, so will nicely link our two gardens. Hopefully I will be able to go and pick it up when lockdown restrictions are lifted. *St. Bernadette, pray for us.*

So, all being well, we are still on track to open the Church for private prayer from **next Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June between 1-4pm**. I have made enquiries as to whether the Blessed Sacrament can be exposed during these hours. We still need stewards to assist on the door, for an hour on a rota, and this is

mandatory, so if you can give an hour on Sunday afternoon, please let myself or Eileen know. Only if we have enough volunteers will we be able to open for an hour so midweek, or First Friday. Let me know your opinions on times or dates. The complications and necessities in opening up do make we wonder how we are going to achieve a restarting of liturgical services and masses, but hopefully we will get some good advice and clear instructions.

Cadbury's Crème Eggs are still available in the porch, in return for a picture of Tobias, which will be judged by him. I've been asked to keep this running for another week, so the result will be announced tomorrow! If you are passing the Church check out the pictures already there!

This weekend is the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. I will be videoing Mass this afternoon, and will mail a link to it, or simply look for St. Bernadette's Bispham on the YouTube and you should be able to find it.

I hope you manage to have a lovely weekend.

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). 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, though hopefully not for long. 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.