

Tuesday April 14<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday in Easter Week.

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.

So a slightly later than usual message this morning, as I have been celebrating two funerals at the Crematorium, so please pray for the repose of the souls of Brian Narey and Kathleen Mosley, *May they rest in peace. Amen.* Numbers are very restricted at the Crematorium at present, so although there were only three people at the second service it was streamed live on the internet, with forty family and friends watching. It's good that this technology which is so often used to ill purposes can be a force of help and good at this time.

So once again a Happy Easter Day to you as we continue to celebrate the Octave of Easter. Today's Gospel is the beautiful resurrection story with Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene at the door of the tomb.

*Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not cling on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"* Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: *"I have seen the Lord!"* And she told them that he had said these things to her.

It is understandable that Mary would not have recognised Jesus. Remember, the last time she had seen him was when he was so disfigured on the cross, then laid in the arms of his Blessed Mother, and finally wrapped and bound in the tomb. But the years of listening to his voice made her hearing so attuned that she immediately recognised him when he said her name. It is a lesson to us that our prayers should not always be lots of words, but also times of silence in which we can truly *'listen to the voice of the Lord, and enter into his peace.'*

Jesus tells Mary “*Do not cling on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.*” There are various suggestions as to what Jesus actually means here, but it’s generally thought that Jesus is saying to Mary ‘Do not cling on to my physical presence, as I must ascend to the Father, and from there I will send you the Holy Spirit, who will teach you everything, and then you will know me in a much deeper and spiritual way.’ It truly is a Gospel for our times, as at the moment we cannot cling on to each other physically, and have to spiritually enjoin ourselves, and find other ways of communicating and staying close to one another, and I believe truly that is what we are doing. One Parishioner in his Easter greeting email, thanking me for these daily messages wrote, ‘*When this situation is finally over and we are back together again, St Bernadette’s will be an even closer, more united community.*’ I hope and pray that that will truly be the case, and that we do all we can to make sure that it is.

Today I spoke to a lady whose Father had died recently. She was finding things difficult as she was sole carer for her Father, and upon his death her only source of income, the carer’s allowance, had immediately stopped, and she was having to wait over a month for Universal Credit to kick in. I assured her that this afternoon, thanks to the amazing generosity of the parishioners of St. Bernadette’s, I would pop round with a bag of food and a Tesco voucher. Your support moved her to tears. Thank you so much and many blessings to you all.

For today’s hymn let’s continue to celebrate Easter with the beautiful ‘Now the Green Blade Riseth’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVduV0ustWw> Don’t forget that as it’s Tuesday it would be great if we could pray the Holy Rosary around seven o’clock tonight, and as it is Easter Week we can pray the Glorious Mysteries:

1. **The Resurrection.** He has risen. He is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. (Mk. 16:6)
2. **The Ascension of the Lord.** So then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God. (Acts 2:4)
3. **The Descent of the Holy Spirit.** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak. (Acts 2:4)
4. **The Assumption of Our Lady.** And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. (Rev. 12:1)
5. **The Coronation of Our Lady.** Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, the honour of thy people; the hand of the Lord has strengthened thee, and therefore thou shalt be blessed for ever. (Judith 15:10-11)

In other news, Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, has been using his time in lockdown to practice his keyboard playing skills. I attach a photo of him serenading me with a couple of numbers from his favourite musical.

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.