

Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup>, Saturday in Week Five 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.

Acts of the Apostles continue in today's first reading (Acts 16:1-10) with Paul setting out on his second missionary journey. This time he recruited Timothy. The two intrepid disciples head for new territory, going over to Macedonia, sharing with various communities the results from the discussions at the Council of Jerusalem. In the Gospel (John 15:18-21) things take a somewhat sombre turn as Jesus tells his disciples that they will suffer because they are his friends - they are not of the world - the world will persecute you too. But in preparing the disciples for his passion and death, he also reminds them that he does not expect them to undergo anything that he is not willing to do; *'If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before you.'* Perhaps in these days it is a reminder to us that our all our experiences can be related to those of Jesus, and especially in times of suffering and isolation, we should always share them with him, that he might transform all ill for good.

*Lord, do not waste one moment of this suffering.*

*Make some good come out of it*

*for myself: a change in life direction, a deepening of faith and love,*

*a protection from other adversity,*

*for myself and others: a zeal for your kingdom, a desire to help others,*

*an empathy with those in need, and an eagerness to serve the kingdom,*

*for the culture, and for the community: a more following of your way.*

*Lord, please optimize the good that can come from this suffering.*

*Amen.*

Today, let us especially pray for our very special First Holy Communion Children: Harrison, Jessica, Mattie, Maisie, Ella, Brook, Ciara, Olivia, Isabella, Verity, Mason, Kaitlynn, Jake, Marcel, Maya, Guillaume, Shay, Lily, Keceh, Adam and Halle. They had been working so hard in the communion workbooks, and had it not been for lockdown this would have been their First Holy Communion Day and we would have had our wonderful celebration Mass followed by the afternoon tea in the Hall. As soon as restrictions are lifted we will continue with the course, and have our great celebrations. That will be certainly one of the things we can all look forward too after this time of lockdown – as well as the baptisms, weddings, and receptions into the Church that have been unable to take place. Perhaps

for our children we could all say this Holy Communion prayer, and as we make our spiritual communion this weekend, let us look forward to the day when we will be celebrating Mass in person together in Church once again.

*My God, help me to make a good Holy Communion.*

*To Thy glory and for the good of my soul I wish to receive the Most Holy Sacrament.*

*Mary, my Mother, pray to Jesus for me.*

*My good Angel Guardian, lead me to the altar of God.*

*My patron Saints, pray for me that I may receive the Lord with a heart that is pleasing to him and with great profit to my soul.*

*Amen.*

I attach a throwback to my own First Holy Communion forty-four years ago, at St. Mary's, Cleator, where I received all the Sacraments right up to Ordination. Butter wouldn't melt... In our family we remember that it was the same day as my Dad's Graduation with the Open University, so after the Mass and Communion breakfast we were all bunged in the car and taken to Newcastle for the ceremony - still in my red tie and shorts.

As we continue to pray for Bishop Paul, who fractured his skull falling off his bicycle, could we also pray for my mate the Vicar General, Father Paul Embery, Parish Priest in Ulverston, who has badly broken his wrist - falling off his bicycle. I think God is trying to tell us something here... Get well soon, gentlemen!

I'll shortly be going in to Church to hopefully record this Sunday's Mass, and this week there will be a couple of hymns for you to join in. All being well I will send a link to the YouTube as soon as it is uploaded. Again, thanks to Ian for all the technical know-how. I attach the texts of this Sunday's Mass, as well as the newsletter, which again contains little new, but does show for whom I'll be celebrating mass this week, as well as the two funeral services I'll be taking on Friday – yes 'only' two. Incidentally, one of the Undertakers remarked the other day that there was a lessening off of the number of funeral services, so hopefully that is a good thing, and we may all be moving forward.

And finally, I think I need another challenge. Any suggestions?

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Any suggestions for this Message and 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.