

Tuesday June 16th, Tuesday in the Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time Year II

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 our Old Testament reading this morning, I K 21:17-29, Elijah now confronts the wicked king Ahab for his double dealing in stealing Naboth's vineyard. He foretells terrible doom for him and his wife Jezebel - the dogs will lick your blood and eat your wife. But Ahab does penance and the Lord relents, but warns that the disaster will strike his house in the days of his son. This is a reminder that despite having won forgiveness from the Lord, the effects of his sin – the death of Naboth - still continue, and knowing that his son will be the last of Ahab's line is a huge penance for him.

In Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus gives his sixth radical teaching. *'You have heard it said... but I say to you... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'* This teaching might seem second nature to us, at least the knowledge of it, as it is sometimes harder to live out. But once again, rather than seeing it as a fulfilment of the Old Law, taking our ability to love deeper than before as we know have the presence of Jesus, many of the first hearers of this teaching of Christ thought of it as a complete subversion, or abolition of the law, and reacted with hostility. It was such reactions that lead Jesus to his death – and of course he died with words of love and forgiveness for his persecutors on his lips. Then Jesus goes on to say something quite extraordinary, *'You must strive to be as perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.'* What? Jesus is calling us to be as perfect as God the Father? Surely not? Well yes, he is. It shows that Jesus sees great potentiality in us to be reconfigured in his like, the image and likeness of God in which we were all first made. So, yes, he wants us to strive to be perfect.

*I'm not perfect Lord but with you I'm striving to be
I make mistakes Father, I may mess up,
I struggle with certain things in my life
I may feel great and fulfilled one day and not next
I know I want to be all I can be for you
I may say or do things not right, but I don't mean to
I may be so tired and worn out, but I do Love you Lord Jesus,
I know life's struggles are a part of our test in faith in you
I'm not perfect Lord, I ask you to help me along my way to strengthen me,*

*guide me, walk and talk to me,
Thank You for always being there for me and with me.
Thank you for your loving grace and mercy,
Help me to be more perfect Lord Jesus*

And given this great commandment to love, let us sing 'Love Is His Word, Love Is His Way,'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQWcTjA8e90>

So did many of you go running out to the newly opened shops yesterday? I have to admit I did go into Blackpool to see what was going on, and the news about huge queues around Primark and JD Sports was absolutely true, quite extraordinary. I did queue to go into HMV, a very small queue, but they only seemed to be allowing about half a dozen people in there at a time. Whilst I was queueing the doorman and I were commenting on the huge queues for the other shops, 'They're already wearing clothes,' he said, 'why the panic?' and whilst I had to agree to an extent, I don't think it was really all about wanting clothes or spending money. I think there was an element of 'let's get back to normality' about it, wanting to be out and about with family and friends, learning to appreciate things that we took for granted, even at a social distance. Certainly there was a very happy atmosphere, as though people could really breathe out, and look to the future, maybe with a little more hope. If, for some, normality is going to Primark, let us hope we too can soon get back to our normality, and regularly praise and worship and celebrate together in Church.

*When this is over,
may we never again
take normality for granted
When this ends,
may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be,
we were called to be,
we hoped to be,
and may we stay
that way-
better for each other
because of the worst.*

The good news is that we are still on track to open up on Sunday. Many thanks for everyone who has volunteered for stewardship. Any other help would be most appreciated, especially if we decide to have mid-week opening as well. Please let me know your suggestions for times that are best to open.

In other news, Mrs. Satterthwaite brought me some lovely presents last Friday; one of them was a huge roll of social distance marking tape. And the others weren't – as you can see in the attached pic! Thank you, Mrs. Satterthwaite!

Mass of Corpus Christi will be available all week at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JhSLoRg45I&feature=youtu.be>

The link for the Mass sheet is

<https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/uploads/www.rpbooks.co.uk/13BodyBloodChrist.pdf> .

Enjoy this beautiful day – and if you're queuing for Primark, say a prayer of thanksgiving for the weather!

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.