

Friday June 19th, Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

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.

Today, the second Friday after Pentecost, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and this is what Pope Saint John Paul II said regarding this devotion;

'To celebrate the heart of Christ means to go to the inner centre of the Person of the Saviour, the centre which the Bible identifies as his Heart, the seat of the love that has redeemed the world. If the human heart is really an unfathomable mystery known only to God, how much more sublime is the heart of Jesus, in whom the very life of the Word is pulsating. Echoing the Scriptures, as the beautiful Litany of the Sacred Heart suggests that we find in the Heart of Jesus all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and the whole fullness of divinity. To save man, the victim of his own disobedience, God wanted to give him a 'new heart' that would be faithful to his loving will. This heart is the heart of Jesus, the Holy Spirit's masterpiece, which began to beat in Mary's virginal womb and was pierced by the spear as Jesus hung on the cross, becoming for all an exhaustible source of eternal life. This heart is now a pledge of hope for every man and woman.'

Today's Feast is wholly about Jesus' love for us. As Saint John Paul said, this heart started beating out of love for us in the womb of our Blessed Mother Mary. Out of love he allowed that heart to be stopped when he died for us on Good Friday. And in order that one day we could return our love to the Sacred Heart in Heaven, that heart started beating again on Easter Sunday when he rose from the dead. In the Gospel Reading for today's Feast, Matthew 11:25-30, Jesus invites us: *'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.'* Jesus opens his heart and invites us to come to him. As we look back at his ministry we can think of many occasions on which his heart would have been 'wounded'. His rejection by most of the people who heard his message, a lack of faith and understanding even among those closest to him, and an abandonment at the time of his passion. There were of course other moments that would have made his heart glad, seeing some people find healing and rest through his words and actions, and the simple joy of friendship in the company of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. But whatever that Sacred Heart was feeling, it never, ever ceased to love. As today's second reading from St. John's First Letter tells us, *'God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him.'*

*Grant we pray, almighty God,
that we, who glory in the Heart of your beloved Son
and recall the wonders of his love for us,
may be made worthy to receive and overflowing measure of grace
from that fount of heavenly gifts.
Though our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen*

And what else could our hymn be today other than ‘Sweet Heart of Jesus.’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNSTtBMm4YM>

I'm sure some of you, perhaps when journeying to or from Lourdes, or visiting the shrines of France, may have visited Paray-la-Monial, and the Convent of the Visitation Sisters, where, in the seventeenth century St. Margaret Mary Alacoque had several visions and mystical revelations concerning the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and she, along with her confessor St. Claude, spread devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout the world. She was canonised in 1920. She wrote many prayers to the Sacred Heart.

*Lord Jesus, let my heart never rest until it finds You,
who are its centre, its love, and its happiness.
By the wound in Your heart pardon the sins that I have committed
Place my weak heart in Your own divine Heart,
continually under Your protection and guidance,
so that I may persevere in doing good
until my last breath. Amen.*

This Sunday we will have our first opening for the Church for private prayer from 1am-4pm. Please do come along to spend a few moments in front of the Blessed Sacrament, especially to make a fervent prayer that soon we will all be able to come together somehow to celebrate Mass. Many thanks to those who have volunteered for Stewardship. More volunteers would be very much appreciated. If Sunday goes well, I would also propose opening for an hour or so midweek, but let us see how Sunday goes first. I will be pottering around, so look forward to seeing you.

I am constantly thanking you for all your kind contributions to all the different causes that we support, as well as your weekly offerings. I hope you don't mind, but I would like to put a plea out for more food for families, not just for here at St. Bernadette's where you are always more than generous, but with the closure of the Blackpool Food Bank during lockdown, ironically when it is most needed, a

small food bank is to be started at St. Cuthbert's School, and any contributions for Sarah and her team there would be most gratefully accepted. Thanking you in anticipation.

I know many of you enjoyed the bloopers from Parish Newsletters that I sent out a few weeks ago, so here are few more to make you smile

A talk on drugs will be given at the next Mothers' Union meeting. This will be followed by a bring and buy sale.

Don't miss the Young Wives' Victorian Evening next month. It will be a fun night and some of the women will wear clothes.

We are delighted to announce that the youth group has raised almost £500 for drug abuse.

Correction: The following typo appeared in our last bulletin: 'Lunch will be gin at 12:15.' Please correct to read '12 noon.'

The Seniors group will have a picnic on Saturday. Each person is asked to bring a friend, a vegetable, and a sweet, all in a covered dish.

Remember the church jumble sale. We have a gents three-speed bicycle, also two ladies for sale, in good running order.

Bertha Belch, a missionary, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Memorial Church. Come and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

We are pleased to note that there has been a change of mind by the Housing Department regarding the name for the new Housing complex for the elderly. 'St Peter's Close' did seem somewhat inappropriate.

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> .

In other news, due to the lack of priests, and the many who are having to self-isolate, the Bishop has suggested that occasionally I will have to be replaced with an emoji – as you can see in the attached picture.

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.