

Monday April 20th, Monday of Second Week of Easter

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.

Once again, the opening prayer from today's mass has a lovely thought for these times:

*Grant, we pray, Almighty God,
that we, who have been renewed by Easter remedies,
transcending the likeness of our earthly parentage,
may be transformed in the image of our heavenly maker.
Through Our Lord, Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reign with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.
Amen.*

I love the phrase 'Easter remedies' as we pray for healing throughout the world, 'Easter remedies' is just what the world needs. Over the past few weeks of lockdown we have been able to focus on what we would have been celebrating, and it perhaps gave some shape and thoughts to our lives. Now that Easter is over, though Eastertide continues, we should more than ever keep our spirits up, as we journey to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Who knows, we may be together by then, but if not, let's pray for a 'Pentecost remedy' and allow the Holy Spirit to keep all our spirits and faith up at this time.

Throughout the Easter Season the first readings follow the life of the young Church communities, as told in the Acts of the Apostles. Incidentally the Acts of the Apostles is one of the books of the Bible which is worth sitting down and reading in one sitting – it's almost like a Boys Own Adventure story, of the Church moving and growing as it journeys from Jerusalem to Rome. The Gospels throughout Eastertide take us from recalling the various Resurrection appearances of Our Lord, to preparing for Pentecost. In today's Gospel there is a little hint of what is to come when Jesus tells Nicodemus (John 3:1-8) that 'the wind blows wherever it pleases' reminding us that we cannot control the Holy Spirit, but must allow ourselves to be guided and directed by the Third Person of the Trinity. As we live through these challenging times we should seek a renewal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we

received at our Confirmation, so that we can act and respond in the most appropriate way. Easter and Pentecost remedies!

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.
O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise
and ever enjoy His consolations,
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.*

As you'll know from homilies, I'm a big fan of patron Saints, and finding out which Saint to invoke for whatever reason. A lot of us are very grateful for streamed masses and services at the moment, as well as using the various video conferencing sites to stay in touch with relatives and friends. Certainly I've never sent as many emails as I have been doing during lockdown. It's wonderful that what is so often used for ill-use has become such a force for good and bringing us together in this time. So perhaps it's time to give a big shout out to Saint Isidore of Seville. In 1997 Pope John Paul II declared Isidore of Seville the Patron Saint of the internet. Saint Isidore died in the year 636, but during his life he wrote a 20 book work called 'Etymologies', also known as 'The Origins', in which he tried to record everything that was known. Published after his death it was for a thousand years considered the encyclopaedia of all human knowledge. Written in simple Latin, it was all somebody needed in order to have access to everything he wanted to know about the world but never dared to ask, from the 28 types of common noun to the names of different clothing. It was a tool used by those seeking wisdom much like the internet is used now. So perhaps we could all say the official Prayer for the Intercession of St. Isidore, trusting that he will ensure our broadband speeds don't falter, and that we will use this incredible tool safely and wisely.

*Almighty and eternal God
who has created us in thine image
and bade us to seek after all that is good, true and beautiful,
especially in the divine person of Thy only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ,
grant we beseech Thee that through the intercession of Saint Isidore, bishop and doctor,
during our journeys through the internet
we will direct our hands and eyes only to that which is pleasing to Thee
and treat with charity and patience all those souls whom we encounter.
Father we ask you this, through Christ our Lord. Amen*

So as we are looking at our screens, watching our masses, conversing with family and friends, may the Lord be at the heart of all our Google searches as we sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihJAJA4ibEs>

Many thanks to those who have emailed me to say that they will be happy to sponsor my 26,000 steps around the Church. It looks like I'm definitely set to do it next Sunday, and lots of support would be great to raise money for food and vouchers for those in need, so please email your support if you can. Cheers in anticipation.

In other news, tonight I should have been heading to Manchester Airport for a post-Easter break. Tobias is never happy when the suitcase comes out, and always tries to prevent me from packing – as you can see in the attached pic...

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.