

Wednesday April 20th, Wednesday in the Sixth Week 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.

And what a beautiful day it is today. Definitely a day for a nice, healthy walk on the prom. We have been so blessed by the weather over the last few weeks, and it is always a joy to wake up to a wonderful, sunny day. I attach another photo of the grotto as the sun beamed down on our Blessed Mother.

Heavenly Father, I come to You this morning to give You all the praise and honour that is due unto You alone. Thank You Lord, for Your goodness towards us all.

Father, let Your presence be felt in our lives today. We give You all our cares and burdens and we trust that You will take care of us. Help us, dear Lord, to keep our minds and heart focussed on You today, so we will be able to receive Your peace that surpasses all understanding.

Today, on this beautiful day, we choose joy despite of what may be going on in our lives. Lord, strengthen us in Your power and might so that we may be a blessing to others who are hurting.

Though Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

And straight away let's praise God for this beautiful day as we sing 'Morning Has Broken.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rifby1tVE8>

In today's extract from the Acts of the Apostles, Acts 17:15.22-18:1, Paul travels to the great city of Athens where he gives another great sermon. He tried to show the Athenians that their statue to the unknown god was really one to the true God. But when he spoke to them about Jesus rising from the dead many of them scoffed at him. Only a small number wanted to hear from him again. It's worth remembering that even the great St. Paul had days when people did not want to listen to his preaching, a reminder to us, that whenever we feel we are failing in our Christian lives and in our duty to spread the Word of God, we should seek the perseverance and determination of St. Paul.

In the Gospel, John 16:13-15, Jesus continues to develop our understanding of the Holy Spirit and what the Spirit will do, in particular how he will complete the teaching that Jesus has only just begun with the disciples, 'I still have many things to say to you, but they would be too much for you now.' The spirit of truth will lead the Apostles to the complete truth, glorifying Jesus, and leading them to the Father.

Today we also remember St. Bernadine of Siena, truly a Saint for our present times. A great plague was traversing Italy at the end of the fourteenth century (see what I mean about him being a Saint for our times?) In his early teenage years the plague was at its height, and in his home town of Siena twenty people were dying every day. Bernadine went to the local hospital, where they told him to go away to save himself, but, like our amazing NHS workers, Bernadine insisted that he must help, which he did. He is said to have ‘gambled with his life’ for doing so, and thus as well as being one of the Patron Saints of Italy, is also Patron Saint of Gamblers, and, due to his work in hospitals, a Saint to be invoked for people with respiratory problems. He went on to become a Franciscan, and was a brilliant preacher, spreading devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, particular with regards to the ‘IHS’ symbol, which you sometimes see in Churches, the first letters of the name ‘Jesus’ in Greek. He travelled all over Italy on foot, and could preach for hours on end, several times a day. He died in 1444 in the north Italian city of Aquila and is buried in the Basilica of San Bernardino. According to tradition, his grave continued to leak blood until two factions of the city achieved reconciliation.

*O God, who gave the priest Saint Bernadine of Siena
a great love for the Holy Name of Jesus,
grant, through his merits and prayers,
that we may ever be set aflame
with the spirit of your love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Mass of the Ascension has been recorded and Ian has uploaded it to the YouTube site and it can be accessed there, or via this link

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

I now have hymn accompaniments, so if you have a request for a particular hymn, just let me know. Especially for the Feast Hilary has put out some amazing flower arrangements – thank you very much, they’re beautiful, and I attach a photo of them. Let’s say a prayer for our great Flower Arranging Team – and perhaps after lockdown, you may be able to help them?

*The Flower Arranger’s Prayer.
May God grant that our hearts , our eyes and our hands may receive His inspiration
Enabling us to glorify His house
with the beauty of the leaves and blossoms which he has created.
Among the unsung heroines who grace this world of ours
Are those who give and who arrange their church’s lovely flowers.
I wonder if they realise the pleasure that they bring
To people who will gather there to worship and to sing.*

If you haven't already, please sign the petition to allow our Churches to open, with all necessary safety precautions:

<https://citizengo.org/en-gb/rf/179408-open-our-churches-and-restore-worship>

and use your email accounts and FaceBook pages to spread the word. If pubs do open before Churches perhaps we should do what the community of St. Bernadette's did in its infancy – have mass at the Red Lion. We could all have a lovely cooked breakfast afterwards. That really would be the parish going back to its roots.

Have a lovely day.

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.