

Tuesday April 21st Tuesday 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.

In today's Gospel, John 3:7-15, which continues Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus makes reference to his approaching crucifixion; *'and the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believe may have eternal life in him.'* This little sentence really gives us a key to Holy Week. When Moses lifted up the serpent on his staff in the desert, those looking upon it were cured. Similarly, by gazing up at the crucified Christ, we receive the healing that Christ won for us on the cross, the forgiveness of our sins, and our passageway to eternal life, to Easter Sunday and the eternal Easter. We could never achieve salvation ourselves hence why the Son of man **must** be lifted up.

I was wondering, do you have a crucifix in your home? There are so many different images of the cross, and we really should have one in all our homes. As you can imagine, I have several images of the crucified Christ in the presbytery, not least a beautiful framed print of the crucifixion by the 16th century Spanish painter Velasquez, in front of which I pray.

*Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus
while before Your face I humbly kneel and,
with burning soul, pray and beseech You
to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments
of faith, hope, and charity;
true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment.
While I contemplate, with great love and tender pity,
Your five most precious wounds,
pondering over them within me
and calling to mind the words which David,
Your prophet, said to You, my Jesus:
"They have pierced My hands and My feet,
they have numbered all My bones."
Amen.*

I also have two small crosses, of which I attach a picture. The one on the left is made from molten metal which came from Ground Zero in New York. There is a famous image of girders from the fallen building in the shape of a cross, and this cross reflects that. The cross on the right was given to me twenty-six years ago at my Ordination and is made of old nails. Both in their own way different but beautiful, and a reminder of Christ's sacrifice for me. So let today's hymn be a rousing 'How Great Thou Art' *'that on the cross his burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin'*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdE_NKyY_o0

Today we have a message from our Bishops. The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales recognise that this time of the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting every person in our countries. Those who are sick, and their families, are suffering many hardships of isolation from contact with those they love. Our front-line workers in hospitals and in care homes all over our lands are giving exceptional service to those who are vulnerable at this time. In order to show a spiritual solidarity with all those who are involved in the ways described above, each week from next Thursday, a Catholic Bishop will celebrate Mass in their Cathedral which will be live-streamed for people to join. This will take place every Thursday at 7.00pm

23rd April	Cardinal Vincent Nichols	Westminster Cathedral
30th April	Bishop Richard Moth	Arundel Cathedral
7th May	Bishop Marcus Stock	Leeds Cathedral
14th May	Bishop Robert Byrne CO	Newcastle Cathedral
21st May	Bishop Mark Davies	Shrewsbury Cathedral
28th May	Bishop Terence Drainey	Middlesbrough Cathedral

By visiting the Cathedral webpage, or the Bishops' Conference Webpage (cbcew.org.uk) links for the live-streaming of these Masses can be found. In addition, Bishop Paul will be celebrating Mass for the NHS workers every Thursday at the Cathedral in Lancaster at 7pm, though this is not being live-streamed, after which he will return to Bare Lane to clap for our Front Line Workers at 8pm.

Many thanks to everyone who has said they will be sponsoring me for my 26,000 step challenge on Sunday – and also to the Parishioner who has very kindly agreed to supply me with a pizza if I complete it! 26,000 steps is around twelve miles, and should take me hopefully just over three hours. Today I purchased another £300 worth of vouchers from your very kind donations, which I will hand to our schools who know best where they need to go. Huge thanks and many blessings for your amazing kindness and support.

Don't forget that as it is Tuesday, it would be great if we could spiritually enjoin ourselves to each other, perhaps around seven o'clock and pray the glorious mysteries of the Rosary, a great celebration of Eastertide.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Sheila Kershaw whose funeral I will be celebrating at Carleton later this morning. I used to take Holy Communion to Sheila at Autumn Leaves Rest Home, along with Pat Gregory, and she always used to say it was very kind of me to bring my mother along as well! She was a dear, sweet lady. *Requiescat in pace.*

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.