

Sunday June 21st, Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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 everyone continues to pray for all our needs at this time.

'Do not be afraid.' Those words are spoken by Jesus twice in today's Gospel, Matthew 10:26-33, as well as many other times in Scripture – they are the first words of the Angel Gabriel to Mary and then to the Shepherds, as well as being the first words of Jesus to the disciples when he appears to them in the Upper Room after his resurrection. Today Jesus uses these words as he sends the Apostles out on a missionary journey, and whilst he is quite open about some of the difficulties that the Apostles will have to endure, he also makes clear to them how much God loves them, and will take care of them, *'Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.'* Whilst these words are preparing the disciples for their preaching, and people's sometimes negative reactions to it, Jesus' words are applicable to so many situations in our lives, not least the situation we find ourselves in at the moment. We may be afraid to step out of doors. We may be afraid of even coming to Church for five minutes. We may be afraid for our families, for our children, for our elderly. We may be afraid of the future, of our jobs, of whether the Church will ever be the same again. We may quite simply be afraid of the unknown. In such situations as these sometimes all we can do is cling on to the words of Jesus in the Gospel. The Father loves us. He wants the best for us. He is looking after us in myriads of ways which we cannot even imagine. We have to place our trust in him, and not be afraid.

Lord, You are a good Father.

Your love and care is endless.

You care more about my wellbeing than even I do, no matter how much I worry over it.

*And you are all powerful – able to protect me completely and fully
from anything that might arise.*

*You have counted each hair on my head,
you say I'm worth more than hundreds of sparrows.*

Lord, I confess I often forget these truths.

I confess I am prone to believe that I am alone and without any protection.

*I lay at your feet all that worry and fear now
and trust in your goodness towards me.*

*Help me believe and live out the truth that you are always close,
always protecting me, always watching over every step of my life.
Thank you Lord for your great love for me,
and help me heed the words of you Son, 'Do not be afraid.'
Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen*

God has not given us spirit of fear. Let us ask him to replace our fears with his power and love and let today's hymn be 'Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psgn0tAp6IE>

This weekend we would in normal circumstances have celebrated Quarant'Ore, our forty hours of watching in front of the Blessed Sacrament, concluding with Rosary, Sermon and Benediction in honour of the Sacred Heart in his month of June, generally followed by tea and scones. Alas that cannot be, but at least today we will have the Church open for the first time in three months and we will have opportunity to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament for a few moments. It's taken quite a bit of doing – cleaning down the benches, roping off areas, printing out and putting up posters, etc. If you feel able, please do pop in for a few moments of silent prayer. The flowers ladies have done the altar proud for the weekend, as you can see in the beautiful picture attached, and many thanks to them. As a 'P.S.' to this message, I just repeat the entering the Church instructions from yesterday. I look forward to seeing you there. If all goes well, I hope to open for an hour on Wednesdays from 12-1pm. I'll keep you posted! It's one step nearer to having Mass together again!

And today is Father's Day, so a Happy and Blessed Day for all the Fathers in our congregation. And let's say a prayer for all our Dads;

*Dear God,
Bless all the fathers in the world who have accepted the responsibilities of being a parent.
Guide them to be outstanding role models to their children.
Let them look to your example and to parent with patience,
unconditional love and understanding. Amen.*

Mass for the Twelfth Sunday of the Year is available on the YouTube at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PN0e_G6n4AE&feature=youtu.be

The two hymns are 'All People That On Earth Do Dwell' and four verses of 'Immaculate Mary.'

The official link for the Mass Sheet is

https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/uploads/www.rpbooks.co.uk/14_12inOrdinaryTimeA.pdf

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.

Yesterday's Instructions for Coming to Church.

The Church will be open from 1pm-4pm for private prayer and devotion. This means sadly there can be no prayers celebrated out loud, no public recitation of the Rosary, for example. Prayers sheets will be available for single use usage (though you may take them home), and you will be allowed to light candles, taking the light from another lit candle, not using a taper or match. There will be stewards on hand, to ask you sanitize your hands as you enter and when you leave, and they will direct you to the seats, in the last few rows of the Church which have been earmarked for individuals. Upon leaving you will be asked to sanitize your hands once again, and the stewards will come forward to wipe down the place where you sat or knelt. Please keep socially distanced, which is still 2 metres (although that looks to change very soon). The toilets have to remain closed. Only twelve people will be allowed in the Church at any one time. If all goes well, and people feel there is a need for it, I will try and arrange a midweek opening too. Huge thanks to those who have volunteered to be stewards, and if anyone else is willing to go on the rota, stewarding for one hour on Sunday or Wednesday, please let myself or Eileen know. I will be pottering around throughout the three hours, and look forward to seeing you.