

Friday April 24th Friday 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.

Throughout Eastertide we'll be reading passages from the Gospel of St. John. Today we move from Chapter 3 to Chapter 6 (chapters 4 & 5 having been covered during Lent). Chapter 6 begins with the feeding of the 5,000 an episode which occurs in all four Gospels. However in the Gospel according to John it becomes the occasion of Jesus identifying himself as 'the Bread of Life' and inviting his disciples to 'eat his flesh and drink his blood'. Today's opening reading (John 6:1-15) describes the feeding of the 5,000 and throughout next week we will hear more of Jesus's 'Bread of Life' discourse, leading us to the Feast of Corpus Christi, and a greater understanding of the Eucharist.

In today's gospel reading we obviously know Jesus, we also know the names of the two disciples who feature that is Philip and Andrew, but the person who remains anonymous is the small boy who offers to Jesus his five loaves and two fish. Yet without his contribution this miraculous event would not have happened. Sometime we feel that we have very little to offer, this maybe even more the case in the present situation. This reading reminds us that whatever we offer to the Lord he is able to do more with it than we could possibly even imagine. Think about how everyone brings a tin or two to Church on Food Sunday, and as community of the Lord, we manage to help so many people. If everyone does something, even the tiniest thing, then huge miracles can occur. Let's pledge ourselves to be that small boy who offers what he can, and changes thousands of people's lives.

Loving and compassionate Jesus,

Help us to respond to the things our eyes perceive.

Help us to tend to the people in this world who are in need.

Help us to be generous with our resources, words and time.

Help us to follow you as you lead and guide.

Amen

And let today's hymn be 'Take Our Bread, We Ask You'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSyqq4E7_TQ

Many thanks for all the supportive comments and reviews about my radio debut yesterday afternoon. It was quite a day. It all started on Wednesday afternoon, when I got a call from a man who works for

the BBC. His mother is a Parishioner and had been passing on some of these messages and photos. He was intrigued, and was hoping for a 'feel good' story about what the Church is doing during lockdown, particularly with regards to Tobias and the Cuddly Toy Congregation. An interview was set up for yesterday lunchtime, and recorded. I didn't know if it would actually be broadcast, nor whether they'd edit it or not, but from what I gather the whole seven minute interview was broadcast at half-three yesterday afternoon. It was a great opportunity for me to celebrate all the amazing work that our community of St. Bernadette's Church and School does throughout the year, and how we've all been creative in supporting one another and following the teachings of God and his Church. After the interview I then received another call and a video interview was recorded with me demonstrating the Signing Puppet, which apparently will go on Radio Lancashire's Instagram or FaceBook or something, and they said they'd send me a link when it is published. They also said they'd be in touch again, as they'd like to speak to some parishioners about the outreach work that goes on here. So thank you for all the support, and those who have said they'll be sponsoring my mini-marathon on Sunday. Even my brother heard it in Hong Kong and is sending me fifty pounds! And no, I haven't listened to the broadcast, though one parishioner has kindly recorded it for me and sent it to me. I haven't even watched the Mass that we recorded before lockdown. It'd be too weird!

Yesterday afternoon I was called out to anoint someone at the Trinity Hospice. It was quite an operation. Before they let me in they took my temperature, and that being ok (pew!) I was then gloved, gowned and masked up before been taken to the patient. I was allowed to stay a few minutes and chat and pray, before anointing her, and giving her the final apostolic pardon, as we have now been instructed, with a cotton wool bud, which I then brought back to the presbytery, and following diocesan guidelines, burnt. Please remember that I can be called to anoint and say prayers for those who are nearing the end of their lives, and please **do not hesitate** to call me if necessary.

I attach a really lovely picture, which his parents have allowed me to send to you. One of our very youngest parishioners has used an Old Testament story to give us all a powerful message about the power of God, and our need to turn to him for strength at this time! Well done, and thank you!

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Brian Furness, whose funeral I celebrated at 8:30am this morning, and Patrick Caul, whose funeral I will celebrate at 11:45am later today at Carleton. *May they rest in the peace of Christ.*

Finally some very sad news, our dear friend and Parishioner Alan Bird died, peacefully, last night in hospital. Christine has kindly allowed me to let you all know through this message. Let our hearts, love and prayers be very much with Christine and her family at this time. And for Alan *Eternal rest*

grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

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.