

Monday April 27<sup>th</sup> Monday in the Third 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 so the Third Week of Easter begins and we continue our reading of the Acts of the Apostles. Today and tomorrow we hear about St. Stephen, the first martyr. When the members of the Sanhedrin, the Council, accuse Stephen of Blasphemy, we are told that 'his face appeared to them like the face an angel.' (Acts (8:15) Stephen was happy to bear their taunts, and eventual martyrdom, because he knew he was doing the work of the Lord, and that happiness shone in his face.

But the subsequent martyrdom of St. Stephen (which is tomorrow's first reading (Acts 7:51-8:1) reminds us that while we are singing our jolly alleluias in 'This Joyful Eastertide,' we that the consequences of Jesus' death and resurrection for some people was martyrdom. Not everyone received the message of Christ crucified and risen peaceably – and that has continued down the ages. One of the reasons I was quite nervous doing the unscripted interview on the radio last week was that, given the medias' general stance on organised religion, I thought that on one hand they might be too flippant, or on the other throw in some curveball about how can you believe in God in the midst of a Pandemic. As it was, as many of you heard, the interviewer was wholly positive about what we do, and what we are doing in these times, and I believe that the programme as a whole (which, no, I have still not listened to) was all about the good the various world faiths are doing individually and collectively, and I must thank Sean, who set up the interview (and his mother who told him about Tobias) for giving all our faiths an outlet to share our work at this time. So let's all continue to give a bold and joyful account of a faith in Jesus, especially in our current circumstances, and let that joy shine in our faces. So with faces of Angels, let's sing 'Hail, Redeemer, King Divine,' and be part of the 'Angels, Saints and Nations' as we sing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMV7737SdiY>

In the Gospel, as I've been saying, it's all about the Bread of Life. Jesus tells us '*Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life.*' It's interesting that one of the things we do to work for the food that endures to eternal life, that is, Christ himself, is to give material food to those who are hungry.

*God our Father,  
in the name of him who gave bread to the hungry,*

*we remember all who,  
through our human ignorance, folly, and sin,  
are condemned to live in want.  
Show us, who have so much, what we can do  
to help those who have so little;  
and bless the efforts of those  
who work to overcome poverty and hunger,  
that sufficient food may be found for all;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

You've been sending some lovely congratulatory emails with regard to the 26,000 step challenge, and I'd like to thank you all for your encouragement, your support and your congratulations, as well as your sponsorship money which is still coming in. It was quite pleasant wandering round, saying my Divine Office and then the complete Holy Rosary. Many thanks to the people who came to give me a little cheer, and the person who put up the Good Luck poster and left the can of G&T (I've an inkling it was little Jack) – it was most welcome! I'll announce the total next Sunday. Our schools will be so thankful for your contributions which are so needed at this time. Many blessings to you all.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Neil Staniforth, whose funeral I will celebrate later today at Carleton at 4pm. *May he rest in the peace of Christ.*

In other news, following his new found fame on the sound radio, Tobias, The Presbytery Cat, received his first fan mail, and the present of a cat-nip banana from a fellow feline called Sooty, who lives in St. Albans. He very much enjoyed the accompanying treats and reading the letter, 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.