Wednesday March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord.

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.

Today is the glorious Feast of the Annunciation. This feast commemorates the real beginning of the Incarnation. Mary was told that she was to become the mother of one who was to be called the Son of the Most High. It is important to remember, that she was not coerced into this position. She gave her free consent when she said: **`Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word.'** At that time she probably did not fully realise the implications of her undertaking, but she had a great faith and trust in God. Throughout her life we see her keeping her word and committing herself to the service of her son, who was the Word of God. Would that we could have her faith and trust and commitment – especially at this time.

Today would be an especially good day to pray ‘The Angelic Salutation’ or **‘The Angelus’** as we usually call the prayer:

*The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,*

*And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace...*

*Behold the handmaid of the Lord.*

*Be it done unto me according to Your Word.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace...*

*And the Word was made flesh,*

*And dwelt among us.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace...*

*Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.*

*That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

*Let us pray:*

*Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord,*

*Your Grace into our hearts;*

*that as we have known the incarnation of Christ,*

*your Son by the message of an angel,*

*so by His passion and cross*

*we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.*

*Through the same Christ, our Lord.*

*Amen.*

In view of today’s feast I think that our hymn should be ‘Holy Virgin, by God’s Decree’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxAbbAK04WE>

Don’t forget that at lunchtime today Pope Francis has called for all Christians throughout the world to join in praying the Our Father. Millions of prayers being prayed throughout our various time-zones to the Father, filled with the Spirit, through the Universal King, Jesus Christ. Wonderful.

I hope many of us enjoined ourselves spiritually last night praying the Rosary. It was a lovely moment of peace here in the presbytery. On Friday I will send out some prayers so that we can all pray the Stations of the Cross. Please note that I’m still saying mass every day in Church, and I attach a picture of the altar all ready for Mass. If you would like an intention celebrated due this time, just pop the details in the letterbox whilst on your exercise walk, or give me a call here.

Please spare a thought for our furry friends at this time too. No, I don’t mean me. I’m thinking of our animals. I attach a picture of Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, when I told him that Cat Treats were to be rationed. He was understandably very shocked…

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.

P.S. The Feast of the Annunciation means that it is exactly nine months to Christmas!