Friday March 27th, Friday of Week Four in Lent Year A.

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.

It was so great to hear all the clapping and cheering for our carers last night. It’s another example of how in our isolation we can still unite. I stood at the door of the presbytery, and added my appreciation. We should all be so grateful.

Please remember our school in your prayers. It remains open for children of working parents, and also is the conduit for supplying school meals to vulnerable families. Mrs. Satterthwaite and the staff have been amazing, and are continuing to be upbeat throughout the crisis. They will also be keeping the school open throughout what would have been the Easter Holidays, so hats off to them. I’m using money from the poor box to buy vouchers for some of our families. Next weekend will be food weekend, and, if you have any food donations they can be left at the presbytery – just ring the doorbell and leave the bag on the step – or in the Church porch which will be open from 10:30am on Sunday, and will be checked regularly, and can also be seen from my kitchen via the cameras. If there is someone in the porch, please wait until they have left before going in, so as to keep our social distance. Alternatively, financial donations can be placed in the presbytery letterbox. Many thanks in anticipation.

As it’s Friday I ask us all to unite this afternoon at 3pm to pray the Stations of the Cross. I attach a Stations of the Cross leaflet, as well as the shorter version of the traditional St. Alphonsus Stations of the Cross which he wrote nearly three hundred years ago, and are still as beautiful as ever. Let’s make our him today the beautiful ‘Stabat Mater’, ‘At The Cross Her Station Keeeping’. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=on2gpmtTIM8>

This evening, at **5pm UK** time Friday 27th March, Pope Francis will preside over a time of universal prayer for an end to the Pandemic. The ceremony will consist in readings from the Scriptures, prayers of supplication, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and will conclude with Pope Francis giving the Urbi et Orbi blessing, with the possibility of gaining a plenary indulgence for all those who listen to it live through the various media. The blessing is normally only given on Christmas and Easter. So switch off Tipping Point and join in the prayers and blessing. You can watch the broadcast at 6pm Rome time which **5pm here in the UK** on the Vatican website: www.vaticannews.va/en/epg.html#schedules

One Parishioner has suggested that when we are washing our hands, instead of singing ‘Happy Birthday’ twice, you get the same effect by praying an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be. Not a bad idea considering we need all the prayers we can get.

I’m sorry to report that Tobias, The Presbytery Cat, has not been on his best behaviour. Wherever I place his rationed Cat Treats, even on the highest shelf, he performs Mission Impossible feats to get hold of them – as you can see in the attached photo.

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.