

The Weekly Message from St. Bernadette's: Week Beginning Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup> 2021

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's. I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the guidance we receive to overcome these strange times, and continuing to pray for all our needs at this time.

And what a week it has been, from gorgeous sunshine to absolute downpours (one of which I did get caught in). Neve the less it's been great to see the school back in full force, and to hear the children playing in the grounds during their breaks. Good to be getting back to 'normal'!

Today's Gospel, Mark 8:27-35 presents us with St. Peter's great profession of faith that Jesus is the Christ - an important moment in all the Gospels, and it is from this point that Jesus, recognising how far the Apostles have come on their journey of faith, truly begins to teach the disciples about the Passion and his death and resurrection which he is accomplish in Jerusalem. There's a still a lot for the Apostles to learn, as Peter clearly doesn't understand the meaning of Jesus' words, and is appalled at the suggestion that the Messiah should suffer and die. At the end of the Gospel Jesus invites us to follow him - if we are able to share in his passion and cross and follow him, *'For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, will save it.'*

*God our heavenly Father,  
Help us to follow your Son,  
renouncing our selves,  
and taking up our crosses daily,  
uniting them with the salvific suffering and death of your Son Jesus,  
who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

'Will You Come and Follow Me?' seems a suitable question to ask in hymn form after this Gospel.

And let's pray we can say a resounding 'Yes' after we have sung the hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk6IUalJ3sk>

Throughout our weekday readings this week we continue St. Paul's Letter to Timothy, which begins with a great call to prayer, and then goes on to practical aspects about the organisation of the Christian community, the kind of people who should be chosen to work and what is expected of them, and how Church ministries are spiritual gifts which must be carried out properly. The letter finishes with a prayer, *'to Christ... the King of Kings and Lord of Lords... be honour and ever lasting power. Amen.'* And as St. Luke's Gospel continues Jesus meets extraordinary people of faith, a Centurion, a bereaved Mother in Nain, and a forgiven woman who is judged by others. The week concludes with the great Parable of the Sower, asking us to reflect on how we respond to the Word of God. Don't forget there

is Mass each day of the week, in which we can come together to celebrate the Word of God, and receive his presence in the Eucharist.

On Sunday in which the Gospel tells us to take up our crosses and follow the Lord, it is appropriate that this week we have two Feasts about the Cross of Christ. On Wednesday the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross celebrates the many times the power cross of Jesus has been invoked has been invoked throughout history, originally commemorating the reclamation of the relic of the true cross from the Persians by the Emperor Heraclitus in 629. We are reminded how the Israelites received healing the desert when they looked at the bronze serpent on the staff of Moses, the humility of Jesus in entering history for us and being prepared to die the ignominious death on the cross, and the love and forgiveness demonstrated to us in the cross of Christ, through whom the world might be saved.

*God our Father,  
whose Son Jesus walked in obedience to death,  
death on a cross,  
grant that we who celebrate the Holy Cross  
may be made worthy through its merits  
to attain resurrection with your Son,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

And having celebrated the Triumph of the Holy Cross on Wednesday, on Thursday we look to the foot of the Cross, where we honour our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Sorrows, acknowledging the moment the sword prophesied by Simeon pierced her heart in anguish at the death of her son, forever trusting in the will of God.

*God our heavenly,  
we honour our Blessed Lady of Sorrows,  
as she should at the foot of the cross in Jesus' last agony.  
With our Mother Mary,  
may we be blessed to share in the passion of your Son  
and thus attain a share in his resurrection.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Stabat Mater is a 13th-century Christian hymn to Mary, which portrays her suffering as Jesus' mother during his crucifixion. Its author may be either the Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi or Pope Innocent. The title comes from its first line, Stabat Mater dolorosa, which means 'the sorrowful mother was standing'. Many composers have set the words, but perhaps the most famous is by the composer Pergolesi (here it is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P65oBJBdSXM>), and we often sing it as 'At The Cross Her Station Keeping.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2db3X0WSp0>

This weekend marks the twentieth anniversary of the dreadful terrorist attack on the World Trade centre in 2001. A few years ago I visited ground zero, and attach a couple of pictures I took there. Let us pray for peace, and end of such terrorist attacks, doing everything we can in action and prayer (which is part of our Christian action) to stop them.

*Loving God,*

*Welcome into your arms the victims of violence and terrorism.*

*Comfort their families and all who grieve for them.*

*Help us in our fear and uncertainty,*

*And bless us with the knowledge that we are secure in your love.*

*Strengthen all those who work for peace,*

*And may the peace the world cannot give reign in our hearts.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

So where is Paul going to take us this week? Let's see! *'After last week's excursion into Warbreck we return north to Norbreck. At one time it was hard to distinguish Bispham from Norbreck and indeed the area was known as Bispham-with-Norbreck. Few people could imagine that the old Cleveleys Hydro was in Norbreck but such was the case. There is no doubting that this week's real photographic postcard from 1926 is of Norbreck. This tranquil scene was taken from the promenade looking east up Norbreck Road. With the exception of the horse and carriage there are just two ladies walking east on the right-hand side of the road. On the extreme left of the photo is part of the Norbreck Hydro and the history of this establishment I will leave until another week. The building directly up from the horse and carriage is known as Barnfield. The terraced block in the centre of the picture is still there today but not in nearly as good a state of repair. The property nearest the camera on the right can also be seen today with little change. Like so many other gardens theirs has been sacrificed for the purposes of parking. This just leaves the large white building on the right opposite the Hydro. Some parishioners will remember this as the Mariners Bar. It was a popular venue offering lively entertainment, but in 2007 the building was badly damaged by fire and it was demolished in 2008. Sadly the empty site remains an eyesore. In the past this building was also Parker's Victoria Private Hotel and was also used for many years as staff accommodation for the Hydro. In 1934 it was Highfield College, a private school for girls. Certainly a colourful past.'* Colourful indeed! Cheers, Paul!

As I said at the beginning of the Message it's nice to be slowly getting back to normal, and as such, it would be great if we could slowly start to resume proper rotas for readers and ministers and cleaners, as well as recommencing tea and coffee after Mass on Sunday Mornings. If you have taken part in these ministries before, or wish to start, in our new covid safe ways, please see myself or Eileen, or drop an email to the Parish so we can collate such generous people into working rotas to continue our

joyful ascent into the new normality! Huge thanks for everyone who has enabled St. Bernadette's to continue working throughout the past two years, and let's look forward to together continuing the Mission of Christ and his Church in Bispham.

Church is open throughout the week for our live and streamed Masses. Apologies to anyone who tuned in last Saturday at 5pm – the streaming just decided it wanted an afternoon off, and that was that. Normal service was resumed on Sunday, and will hopefully be resumed this week, too! (*St. Isadore of Seville, Patron Saint of the Internet, pray for us*). Don't forget private prayer on Sunday, with Reconciliation in the sacristy. I look forward to seeing you at our continued covid-safe services!

Incidentally, as I type this, some Gilbert and Sullivan is loudly blaring throughout the presbytery from my iPod. I'm reminded that '*Fred Penn lives with his two aunties who run a cafe in the local town. The cafe is famous for its variety of pasties and Fred often helps them out by keeping the menu board up to date. This menu board is what you might call "The Pie Rates of Penn's Aunts"*'. And on that rather duff note, I will take my leave.

Have a great week!

And remember, St. Bernadette's is not closed. 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.