

The Weekly Message from St. Bernadette's: Week Beginning Sunday September 19th 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 I hope you all had a great week, and enjoyed the days of sunshine – I managed a walk along the prom to a very busy Blackpool (listening to 'West Side Story' in case you were wondering, to prepare myself for the release of the new Spielberg film in December) and it was far too hot for me, but I'm not complaining. Today is very much Autumn, so on with this week's mid-September message.

As with last week's Gospel, in today's Sunday Gospel Mark:3-37, the Apostles misunderstand, and are afraid to ask, about the teaching about Jesus's suffering and death, and instead get into an argument about which of them is the greatest! Jesus uses the example of a little child, encouraging us all to have a child-like, not child-ish, child-like faith in him, as he tells us that, '*Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me.*' The teaching is accompanied by a call to service, to be '*the last and servant of all,*' something which Jesus was to go on to more than demonstrate in his death on the cross.

*God our heavenly Father,
may our lives be one of service
to you, and to all your children,
that the teaching and example of your Son Jesus,
will inspire and enrich everything we do in your name.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Back to our Old Testament history in our weekday Scriptures this week (never my favourite, I'm afraid), with passages from Books written after the Israelites had been in Exile in Babylon. This week we hear from the Prophet Ezra, who recounts the return to Judea in 537BC and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, with encouragement from the Prophet Haggai, and finally Zechariah, who in a prophetic vision tells the people not to build a wall around Jerusalem, as it's population would increase as many more people would become part of the chosen people of God. There's also a lot happening in our Gospels this week, from chapters 8 and 9 of Luke. First of us there are lessons to us about sharing our God-given gifts and talents, and a reminder that following God's well is the key to being members of his family. After this we concentrate on the Apostles journey of faith, with their first mission are journey, Peter's great profession of faith that Jesus is indeed the Christ, but also the difficulties understanding the prophecies of Jesus Passion and death.

And we have several Saints and Feast days this week, all of which are worth a mention. On Monday we remember Saints Andrew Kim Tae-got, Priest, and Paul Chong Ha-sang, and Companions, some of over 8000 Christians killed during persecutions in Korea in the 19th century, 102 being canonised. Tuesday celebrates the Apostle and Evangelist Saint Matthew, who, whilst working in the despised profession of Tax Collector, was called by the Lord, and immediately followed him. After the Ascension he is said to have travelled to Ethiopia where he was martyred. Thursday brings us the remembrance of the ever-popular Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, born in 1887, is better known to us as Padre Pio, the popular Capuchin mystic, who famously bore the wounds of Christ, stigmata, on his body. His ministry, especially with regard to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, his spiritual direction, and his extraordinary miracles, drew many devotees to San Giovanni Rotondo. Although he faced some hostility from Church authorities, his popularity was never in doubt, and he was canonised in 2002. And on Saturday we stay in England for the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham. Over a thousand years ago, in 1061, Richeldis de Faverches had a vision that she should build a replica of the Holy House of Nazareth, in North Norfolk, in village of Walsingham. The House of prayer rebuilt became a national place of Pilgrimage, and, despite suffering destruction, has been revived, and now stands as the foremost Marian Shrine in England, drawing both Catholics and Anglicans to offer prayers for the ransom of England, the 'dowry of Mary.' The memorial of Our Lady of Walsingham gives us another chance to place England under the patronage of our Blessed Mother Mary.

*God our heavenly Father,
in the life of the Virgin Mary,
we see true devotion,
and a heartfelt following of your will.
May our blessed Mary our Mother reign over us heavenly Pilgrims once more,
that England my again be her dowry, as in days of yore.
And through her intercession, we make this and all our prayers,
through her Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And with that, let us sing once again that great English Hymn to Our Lady, written just up the road in Hornby, 'Hail Queen of Heaven'. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ebU3EZLs4U

And we are off to the Norbreck Castle for a visit today with Paul: *'Whilst in Norbreck one can hardly ignore the Norbreck Castle Hotel. Love it or hate it it is one of Blackpool's oldest hotels and a building that can be seen for miles. This was a hotel that in the distant past welcomed nobility and the British upper class. Stars of stage, screen and radio performed there and its facilities were second to none. What other Fylde hotel in the mid 1900's could boast an 18-hole golf course, five tennis courts, a bowling green and swimming pool. Sadly, it is now a shadow of it's former self, with only the swimming pool remaining and the buildings and grounds looking very tired and in places unkempt. This weeks real photographic postcard is an aerial view from the 1st half of the 20th century, clearly*

showing the hotel in better times. Note the very small car park in the bottom right. A sign of the times. The remaining frontage is grassed and visitors can be seen sitting out. Some of the tennis courts can be seen in the middle left. A small area of the golf course can be seen in the top middle and left. For those not in the know the golf course was in two parts, both to the north (left) and south (right) of Norbreck Road, which is on the extreme right. When comparing this photograph to one from 1904 it would appear that the only part of the current hotel to have existed then is the castellated building with the external staircase in the bottom right. Norbreck Villa as it was known at the beginning of the 20th century was originally a small private residence and it was James Shorrocks, a Manchester businessman, who transformed it into the Norbreck Hall Hydro. He steadily built on and by 1912 there was considerable expansion. A 9-hole golf course had been created by the time of World War I and by the mid 20's it had been extended to 18. By then it was known as the Norbreck Hydro, only becoming known as the Norbreck Castle in more recent times. During World War II the hotel was commandeered by the Government and remained so for eleven years, being handed back in 1951. One wonders whether this hotel will ever see the same level of past success again.' Cheers, Paul.

Occasionally we receive visitors at mass who are staying at Norbreck Castle, especially during Irish dance conferences, and they invariably complain about the tea!

Sue Ward from St. Theresa's Parish has written to me and I am happy to pass on her important words: *'COP26 – The annual UN Climate Conference takes place 1-12th Nov' in Glasgow. We are all being urged to do what we can to tackle the climate crisis. To this end, a meeting with our MP Paul Maynard has been arranged to discuss how Britain can play a leading role in making sure we plan to recover from the pandemic in a way which includes everyone and cares for our common home. If anyone would like to represent St. Bernadette's at this meeting on Friday 24th Sept' at 1.30pm please contact Sue Ward on Tel: 858346. As Christians, we are being asked to pray in the lead up to the summit. It is a time to renew our relationship with God our Creator and with all creation as we join together in prayer:*

*We give thanks for all God has made
repent for the damage we have caused
and commit ourselves to take action
to protect the earth – our common home.'*

So if anyone can attend this Friday, please do let Sue know. I'll ask Sue for a write up as to how the meeting went, and pass it on to you.

Well Church is slowly getting back to 'new normal'. This week at the 10am Mass we look forward to the return of the choir, who'll be leading us with our masked singing, as well as helping us pray throughout communion, for which we are most grateful. First Communion plans are getting underway, too. Huge thanks to everyone who is 're-volunteering' for reading, ministering, and

cleaning, and new volunteers are still most welcome – see me or Eileen so that new rotas can be prepared. Onward and heaven-ward!

You'll remember over the past few months I have given you the saga of my mate Fr. Ed's Church Tower in Lincoln, with the extraordinary scaffolding within which it was enveloped, as well as Ed scaling the scaffolding himself. Well, he's done it again, this time as the work is now reaching its completion, and it was only right that the Parish Priest should be atop of the tower for the return of the cross, which he duly blessed. You'd have a job getting me on the roof of SB's, so well done Ed!

You know the score, Masses live and streamed over the weekend, and celebrated throughout the week. Don't forget I'm in the sacristy during Sunday's Hour of Exposition, if anyone would like to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And please pray for the repose of the souls of Margaret Rose Darby and Lawrence Kragh, whose funeral services I will be celebrating at Carleton this week. *May they rest in the peace of Christ.*

And if it was too hot for me yesterday, it was definitely too hot for a flaked-out Presbytery cat. Knowing they can sleep anywhere, here is the Cat's pre-nap prayer.

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray this cushy life to keep.
I pray for toys that look like mice,
And sofa cushions, soft and nice.
I pray for gourmet kitty snacks,
And someone nice to scratch my back,
For windowsills all warm and bright,
For shadows to explore at night.
I pray I'll always stay real cool
And keep the secret feline rule
To never tell a human that
The world is really ruled by cats!*

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.

Commented [SBB1]:

Fr. P.

