

The Weekly Message from St. Bernadette's: Week Beginning Sunday October 31<sup>st</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 I hope everyone had a good week – especially those who were having a half term holiday, even if the weather wasn't the best, certainly not for those who ventured up to the Lake District. I hope you all got back safely, and are ready for the coming weeks of freewheeling down to Christmas!

And this weekend, transferred from Monday November 1<sup>st</sup>, we are celebrating the great Solemnity of All Saints. This Feast celebrates the lives and eternal lives of all who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, and now reside in the heavenly mansions - those named by the Church, and those known unto God alone. Originally two Feasts, celebrating the martyrs on April 17th and Saints on April 20th, the two combined to become one universal Feast on November 1st in the eighth century. Through their intercession, we vow to profess, their beliefs, practise what they believed, and celebrate the Eucharist as a forerunner of the Eternal Banquet. The readings are particularly juicy for this Feast, with the adoration of the Lamb by all the Saints, coming from the Book of Revelations, followed by one of my favourite passages from the First Letter of St. John in which future sainthood is promised to us as children of God. Our Gospel is the familiar beginning of The Sermon on the Mount from Matthew's Gospel, The Beatitudes, in which Jesus outlines the kind of people who are truly Blessed, and on this Feast of All Saints, we can really read this Gospel as Jesus' 'Haynes Manual' of how whilst on this Earth we can be journeying to Heaven, with All the Saints.

*God our heavenly Father,  
in this one, beautiful celebration,  
we celebrate the lives of All Saints,  
through whose prayers  
we seek to emulate their lives of faith,  
and follow their journey after death  
to the places prepared for us in the mansions of all the Saints.*

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

And so let's sing 'For All The Saints' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21GTTM2TIYA>

And if it is the Feast of All Saint on Monday (officially), then on Tuesday we remember all the faithful departed on the Feast of All Souls. The Commemoration of all the Faithful departed invites us

in a special way to pray for all those who have died - especially in this month of November. As Pope Benedict XVI taught us, *'The prayer of a pilgrim soul in the world, can help another soul that is being purified after death. This is why the Church invites us today to pray for our beloved deceased and to pause at their tombs in the cemeteries.'*

*God our heavenly Father,  
may our faith in the resurrection of your Son be strengthened,  
as we pray for all the Holy Souls,  
journeying to the heavenly reward  
gained for us all by your Son Jesus,  
and offered freely to one and all.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

There's a few other saints to mention this week: on Wednesday we remember one of our earliest Peruvian Saints, Saint Martin de Porres, who was especially noted for his care for the sick, and for the slaves who were brought to Peru from Africa. And Wednesday is also the celebration in England and Wales of Saint Winifride, who was courted by Caradoc, the son of local nobleman, who, at the resistance of his overtures, decapitated her. Fortunately her Uncle, Saint Beuno restored her life – and her head. The Pilgrimage site of Holywell in North Wales. marks the place of her attempted murder. It's the Feast of the sixteenth century Italian Saint Charles Borromeo on Friday, who, appropriately enough in these Covid times, was an eminent pastor of the sick in great Plague of 1576, himself dying in 1584. And finally on Saturday it is the celebration of All the Saints of Ireland. Let's pray this prayer of St. Patrick, which is appropriate for any Saint, and hopefully for each one of us:

*I arise today  
Through the strength of heaven:  
Light of sun, Radiance of moon, Splendour of fire,  
Speed of lightning, Swiftmess of wind,  
Depth of sea, Stability of earth, Firmness of rock.  
Amen.*

That's a busy liturgical week!

Well after taking us to see the Sisters at Layton Hill last week, we are back on the Fylde Coast as Paul writes; *'The expanse of land south of Squires Gate Lane, which separates Blackpool from St Annes, was used for a variety of purposes in the first half of the 20th century. Indeed, not only was it of great benefit to Blackpool but also to the nation in times of war. Today we know it chiefly because it is the site of Blackpool Airport, well at least what is left of it. The airport's first aviation use was in 1909, when the UK's first official public flying meeting was held on a specially laid out site at Squires Gate*

*and was followed by another in 1910. These meetings were soon to end, however, as permission had been granted for a racecourse and that put an end to flying for many years to come. Blackpool Racecourse, or Clifton Park as it was officially known, opened in August 1911. The publicity promised much, with the Gazette stating that 'all preparations will be on a scale to compete with the highest class of steeplechase racing in France'. There were state of the art stands accommodating 25,000 people and 144 stable boxes. The first meeting was well attended and augured well for the future. Even though prize money was considerable, the course was not able to attract sufficient runners and as a consequence crowds got smaller and smaller. By 1915 the venture was to cease and the site was once again to have a change of use. The Military requisitioned the site and it was turned into a convalescent hospital, providing accommodation for 2000 soldiers from the King's Lancashire Military. It was in use for the remainder of WWI and parts of the facility continued in use until 1924. This week's postcard photograph was dated 1917 and shows the vast number of hospital buildings. Flights from the site resumed in the early 30's and work on enlarging and improving the airfield and facilities began in 1937. With war looming the aerodrome was requisitioned by the Air Ministry in 1938. Three new runways were laid to support operations, with squadrons stationed at the airport during WWII. They included 308 Polish Fighter Squadron from September 1940 to October 1941. The RAF also selected Blackpool as one of its training wings due to the availability of accommodation. Approximately 770,000 recruits received basic training and the base was described as the 'greatest troop-training station in the world'. Aircraft production also took place close to the airport and many Wellington medium bombers were produced by Vickers-Armstrong. The only remaining war-time hangar now houses a visitor centre by the name of Hangar 42. This offers a unique experience to engage with RAF aircraft and vehicles and it also showcases a large assortment of memorabilia.'*

Cheers, Paul! The picture reminds me it's a while since I watched 'Tenko', so that might be next week's TV watch!

Well, what with it being half term there was no school work for me this week, but it was still a busy week with lots of other random things filling up the days, so here a few **random thoughts** from this week, and for next week.

Dreams: whether I've had too much cheese on my pizzas this week I've had some very vivid dreams (no nightmares, which I did have last week after watching two episodes of 'The Haunting of Bly Manor'), two of which had me preparing for a performance of some description, but never actually getting to perform. The second was of a group of us putting together a scratch performance of 'Mass: The Musical' with me as 'the Celebrant', but, alas, I awoke before my opening number. Incidentally, my costume for that production (before vestments are piled upon me) was jeans and a red waistcoat, which Eileen said was on my mind because I'd been thinking about Status Quo.

And why was I thinking about Status Quo? Because earlier this week I celebrated a council organised funeral, and the only information given was that the deceased liked Status Quo. Not being

totally familiar with all their work, I texted my mate Fr. Ed who was a fan in his youthhood (and maybe still is) to ask him for suitable Status Quo tracks for a funeral. He suggested 'Rocking All Over the World' as an entrance; 'Caroline' in the middle (for which the introduction was so long I began to wonder if it was actually an instrumental); and 'Down Down' at the end (although as Ed said, that would have been more suitable for a burial). So that was what we had (at 8:30am in the morning). Whilst musing to Gerry the sacristan who was acting as my chauffer that they all sounded the same, he said that *that* is the whole point of Status Quo, they all sound the same, and that's why they're popular. So why is the same thing a criticism of Lord Webber? Anyway...

It's Bonfire Night this week, so please think of our pets amidst all the banging and flashing, which has already started, and has already freaked out Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, as you can see in the attached photo from the worried look on his face when he was sitting on my knee the other night (although he was also somewhat questioning as to why I was watching 'Celebrity Apprentice Australia' when I don't know any of the 'celebrities' (but then I don't know any of them on any celebrity thingy here in the UK – apparently a sign that you are getting old...)).

And don't forget to put your clocks BACK an hour this evening (technically at 2am Sunday morning). As I'm sure you know (some of you were probably there), Daylight Saving Time was first introduced in the UK in 1916 during the First World War. This was to save on coal usage during the war and take full advantage of natural light. I have to say that I didn't know that the idea of moving the clocks backwards and forwards was invented by a New Zealand entomologist named George Vincent Hudson in 1895. Every day's a school day, as Ben would say on 'Tipping Point'. Incidentally there was a classic Tipping Point howler this week. Question: 'The Greek Poet Homer often refers to nectar as the drink of the gods, and which other substance as their food?', to which the contestant answered, 'Donuts'.

And that's enough random thoughts for this week.

*Police arrested two youths yesterday; one was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks. They charged one - and let the other off. I'll get my coat – and earplugs...*

Check out this week's timetable on the Newsletter, slight altered, but the weekends are as usual as they always are, including time for the Sacrament for Reconciliation on Sunday lunchtimes. Please let people know on your Social media outlets that we are up and open for covid-safe business, and everyone is welcome. As November begins, the box for you Holy Souls Intentions throughout the month is on the sanctuary, and please continue to pray: '*Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*'

Have a great week.

And remember, St. Bernadette's is open, as slowly and gently we 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.