

The Weekly Message from St. Bernadette's: Week Beginning Sunday November 6th 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 so reach November, and though there is a lot to do before our Christmas festivities, the freewheeling down to the season really begins. This has to be one of the most busiest times in Church and School, and thankfully it's quite a bit different to last year. As you'll see later, and on the Newsletter, we have a packed programme over the next few weeks, but first of all – on with the Scriptures...!

We are presented with another lovely Gospel story today, that of the 'Widow's mite' in Mark 12:38-44. The Scribes and the Pharisees flaunt their wealth, the clothes and their prestige, whereas a poor widow, in giving the least of all to the treasury, is applauded by Jesus for giving more than any one else, as she has given everything that she had, all she had to live on. This is preceded by the lovely reading from First Book of Kings, where a widow who uses her last flour and oil to make a scone for Elijah, miraculously finds out that her jars of flour and oil now never empty. Please don't think this Gospel is just about what we can give materially to God and his Church – it is as much about what we can give spiritually, offering all our gifts, talents, and times to the service of the Almighty.

*God our heavenly Father,
you have given us so much, and ask us to give so little!
Teach us to be generous with all that we have,
knowing that in you we have all we need to live on.
And may our prayers and actions ensure that no one is in need
materially, physically, or spiritually.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

'All that I Am' makes a suitable hymn after that Gospel: not the best sung version, but very heartfelt, and very bouncy! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3Xona5g76k>

Well last weekend we celebrated 'All Saints', then on Saturday the 'All Saints of Ireland', and this week on Monday it's the turn of 'All the Saints of Wales' especially those of the so-called 'Age of the Saints' in the fifth and sixth centuries, and whose lives on Earth, and now prayers from heaven, continue to inspire and benefit each of us pilgrims on our journeys.

*God our heavenly Father,
may we who celebrate the memory of the Saints of Wales
be enriched by their words, their actions, and their faith,*

and continue their mission, wherever we may be.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And on Wednesday we celebrate the Dedication of The Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. It's one of several Feasts of Dedication of Basilicas in Rome, and fits in with the our own celebration of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Lancaster. This Church is considered to be the Mother Church of all Christendom, and as such this Feast stands a demonstration of unity and devotion to the Chair of St. Peter, and the universal nature of the one, true Church.

*God our heavenly Father,
man built from glass and stone,
temples of your majesty;
increase the faith and spirit of your Church,
that, staying true to Peter and to thee,
the faithful may grow, the Church may build,
and all will journey as one to your heavenly Jerusalem.
Though our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Other Saints this week include Saint Leo the Great, a fifth century Pope and Doctor of the Church on Wednesday; the fourth century Bishop of Tours, Saint Martin, on Thursday; and the sixteenth century Ukrainian Bishop and Martyr Saint Josaphat on Friday. Something for everyone this liturgical week, methinks, but I'll leave you to look up any favourites of your own!!

Over to Paul... for a trip on the Knott End Ferry! *'With the Fylde being surrounded by water on three sides it's surprising that, to the best of my knowledge, the only opportunity for the public to ride the waves is on the Knott End Ferry. In the not too distant past, however, this was certainly not the case. It will probably come as a surprise to some to learn that there were regular pleasure trips from Blackpool in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first regular ferry services, however, ran from Fleetwood with routes to Barrow, Belfast and Ardrossan. Indeed, Queen Victoria would travel by train to Fleetwood and then take the ferry to Ardrossan in the days before the railway reached Scotland. Ferry services between Fleetwood and Barrow were extremely popular in the early 1900's with many Blackpool holidaymakers taking the opportunity to see a little of the Lake District on their day trip. Scheduled services to the Isle of Man started in 1842, albeit seasonal, but ceased in 1961. However, day trips continued until 2005. P&O and then Stena ran freight services to Larne, with a limited capacity for cars and their passengers, but these ceased in 2010. As for Blackpool, pleasure cruises commenced with the construction of the North and South Piers, in 1863 and 1868 respectively. There were pleasure trips during the season to such places as the Isle of Man, Southport, Morecambe, Liverpool, and Llandudno. Unfortunately, the steamer business had a lot of operational difficulties*

including the very short sailing season and the often unsuitable weather. In some years the boat operators would make losses rather than profits. Along came WWI and in effect the war was to kill off the steamer services, which did not operate between 1915 and 1918 and never picked up again to pre-war levels thereafter. This week's quite rare, early 1900's postcard photograph, shows two steamers at the end of the pier jetty with naval ships anchored off central promenade. Boat services thereafter were of a much more limited nature. Older parishioners will remember the large white planked motorboats that operated off the Central Beach and were stored on the Upper Prom when not in use. There were several unsuccessful attempts to operate hovercrafts, the Blackpool to Southport service managing just one season in 1973. With no other plans on the horizon for public sailing services it looks like we will have to continue to make do with the ever-reliable Knott End Ferry.' Cheers Paul – and an extraordinary photo! And let's look forward to sunny days and trips out soon!

Well, as I said, the second half of the Autumn term has started, and this really is the Christmas Term, as we slowly, or actually rather swiftly, inexorably journey down to our celebrations of the birth of Christ in a few short weeks' time. There are quite a few events we'll be celebrating in the next couple of months, and I give a brief list of them now. Referring to the Gospel of this week, and our giving of our times and talents to God and his Church, please do offer to help running these celebrations in any way you possibly can.

Sunday 14th Nov. Remembrance Sunday. At the 10am mass we will have The Silence, followed by the Last Post, and in honour of our Veterans there will be Sherry Reception in the Hall, to which everyone is invited.

Saturday 20th Nov. 2pm First Holy Communion Mass, in which our last couple of years' from Communicants from Years 4 and 5 will make this special step in their sacramental lives. Year 5 have completed their workbooks at home, and I've been taking year 4 (last years Year 3) through their lessons in class at school with the great support of their teachers. We'll begin present Years 3's Communion programme in the New Year.

Saturday 20th/Sunday 21st our own remembrance Weekend, as I will be calling out the names of the all those whose funerals I have celebrated throughout the past year, and remember all our deceased loved ones.

Saturday 4th Dec. St. Bernadette's Parish Players Present... in the Hall at 7:30pm, a Christmas Radio Play, with mulled wine and Mince Pies. Tickets will be available soon.

Sunday 12th Dec. 4pm Carol Service and Refreshments. St. Bernadette's is so blessed to have our great choir and organist, and already they are rehearsing for what many people refer to as the 'start' of Christmas, and definitely puts us in the right spiritual mood, reminding us of what we are preparing to celebrate. Favourite carols and readings at 4pm. We hope to have the traditional Irish Coffee afterwards, but we do need helpers, so please speak to Eileen or email the house, if you could be of assistance.

And in the midst of the above events we have our School Christmas Nativities, all of which will take place in Church (a change from last years videoed nativity), the wonderful SVP Coffee Morning Sunday Lunch (first Turkey of the year! Yeyyyyy!), School Masses in both of my schools throughout, and that leads us to the Christmas Services, for which we will be asking people to sign up for readers and ministers:

Friday 24th Dec.

5pm. Children's Mass of Christmas

7:45pm Carols followed by 8pm CandleLit Christmas Mass

Saturday 25th Dec.

10am. Christmas Morning Mass

Sunday 26th Dec.

10am. Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family

And along with all our other preparations, I think *that* should keep us all busy (and I feel sure I've forgot one or two things along the way!).

Speaking of school Masses, last week on Monday 1st November we had a wonderful Whole School Mass led by Year 5, for the Feast of All Saints. It's so good to have all our children in Church (as you can see, from the back of the Church), and I would dare to venture we have to some of the best Church readers from our children in the Fylde (well done to *all* our Teachers). I also celebrated Mass for Year 6 at Holy Family on Tuesday afternoon, who had prepared a display of their favourite Saints. At both Masses there was a good discussion on how *we* can become Saints – the answer being working out how we, wherever we can, follow the Spirit of the Beatitudes.

Dear Lord,

Make me poor in spirit, so I can receive the kingdom of heaven.

When I mourn, help me find comfort.

Make me meek, so that I may inherit the land.

Help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness, so I may be satisfied.

Make me merciful, so I may obtain your mercy.

Make me pure of heart, so I may see you.

Help me to make peace, so I may be called your child.

When I am persecuted for righteousness' sake, show me your kingdom.

Amen.

As the Month of the Holy Souls continues, please remember all our deceased relatives, friends, and benefactors, and all the names on our November lists: *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let Your perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.*

And this weekend we also have a very Special Birthday of a Very Special Person... Mentioning no names for the surprise tomorrow morning... The Sherry bottle will be duly opened... Photo's next week...!

Have a great week! Early Christmas Joke: *How did Scrooge win the football game? The Ghost of Christmas passed.* Believe me, they'll get worse...

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.