

GARDENING: LAST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH As new life emerges in the natural world, our beautiful grounds need more work to keep them as lovely as they are. Our small team of gardeners need your help. No experience is needed. A sense of humour and working knees would be useful. Meet at 10am on the last Saturday of each month.

PARISHIONERS WHO ARE UNWELL If you would like the parish to pray for someone who is currently unwell, please email news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk or ring Father Sony on 01772 865229. It will be then be included in the newsletter. We have an area in church where you can write a prayer intention on a card and hang it up if you prefer it not to go on the parish newsletter.

CHURCH DONATIONS With many people still unable to attend church we still need to maintain an income for maintenance. There are several ways you can still make your contributions including by cheque or direct debit. For details please go to the church website or contact Tom Smyth on 017722 865689.

Attendance and Collection

Sunday 2 May – 38: £207.50

Cycle of Prayer During Easter

We pray for: New members of the church; Right use of the media on Communications Day (16 May); The Church, especially at Pentecost (23 May).

Feast Days this Week: Tuesday: St John I, pope and martyr; Wednesday: St Dunstan, bishop; Thursday: St Bernardine of Siena; Friday: St Christopher of Magallanes; Saturday: St Rita of Cascia.

Letter and Prayers from Pope Francis: Pope Francis is asking for people to say the rosary in the month of May to bring an end to the pandemic. A letter giving further details and special prayers is available at the back of church.

Daily Mass live at 9.30am from St Clare's in Preston can be accessed on their YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/StClaresChurch/>



St Francis Hill Chapel Parish Newsletter

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**In case of emergency (and unable to contact Father Sony) please ring
Father Dutton on 01772 782641 or Canon Doyle on 01772 782244**

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

16 May 2021 (Readings: Year B)

Parish Mission Statement

Our Parish, guided by the example of our patron St Francis of Assisi, seeks to be a welcoming Catholic Community, by living, sharing and growing in faith. We strive to deepen our own relationship with Christ and meet the needs of others.

Mass today is for the people of the parish. Please pray for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, especially Kathrine Cook.

Church is now open again for Sunday mass at 10.30am. **Please only attend mass if you feel safe to do so. The dispensation for Sunday mass is still in place.**

SAFETY RULES FOR MASS

Stewards will be on duty to ensure that safety procedures are followed. Full details are on our website. Please do read them. **Face masks will need to be worn as specified by the government. Please follow these guidelines once entering church:**

* **Sanitise hands** on entry.

* Please do **keep your distance** – use the high visibility tape on floor as a guide.

- * Place your collection on the collection plate **as you enter**.
- * Please take a mass sheet & newsletter on entry and **take them away when you leave**.
- * At Holy Communion (given in silence):
Please wear a mask as you go up the aisle to communion and remove their mask before they receive the sacrament.
People from upstairs will go first down the right-hand side and return down the opposite aisle to maintain social distancing.
People on the right-hand side will then receive Holy Communion, followed by people on the left-hand side – guided by the stewards.

BIDDING PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, lead us to live by your life-saving grace. Help us to gain strength and inspiration from your never-ending love for us as we offer our intentions to you today.

We pray for Pope Francis as he reminds us that the greatest joy for every believer is to respond to God's call of love. May we be true followers by showing kindness, understanding and compassion to all those who need our help. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for our young people that continue to bear the brunt of the job crisis. Help them to realise their own unique skills and feel empowered to seek support and guidance for their future career path. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for charities and all those who are working with the most vulnerable in our world. May people show compassion and understanding in ensuring that there is food and support for all those who are in desperate need. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for your never-ending presence in our lives. May your love and compassion be constantly with us as we face the week ahead, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Perhaps one of the best-known saints directly associated with Our Blessed Lady is St Bernadette, who was born in the then tiny village of Lourdes, France on 7 January, 1844. She was baptised two days later at St. Pierre's, the local parish church. Frail in health, Bernadette Soubirous was the eldest of nine children from a poverty-stricken family; her father was a miller. She contracted cholera in the epidemic of 1854 and suffered from asthma and

other ailments throughout her life. In a biography written in 2015 by Constance T. Hull, for the 'Catholic Exchange', we read that: 'On Thursday, 11 February, 1858, fourteen-year-old Bernadette was sent with her younger sister and a friend to gather firewood, when a very beautiful lady appeared to her above a rose bush in a grotto called Massabielle. The woman wore blue and white and smiled at Bernadette before making the sign of the cross with a rosary of ivory and gold. Bernadette fell to her knees, took out her own rosary and began to pray. She later described the woman as *uo petito damizelo*, meaning "a small young lady". Though her sister and friend claimed they were unable to see her, Bernadette knew what she saw was real. Three days later, Bernadette, her sister Marie, and other girls returned to the grotto, where Bernadette immediately knelt, saying she could see the lady again. On 18 February, Bernadette said "the vision" asked her to return to the grotto each day for a fortnight. With each visit, Bernadette saw the Virgin Mary and the period of daily visions became known as *la Quinzaine sacrée*, meaning "holy fortnight".

On 25 February, the vision told her 'to drink of the water of the spring, to wash in it and to eat the herb that grew there' as an act of penance. The next day, the grotto's muddy waters became clear and fresh clean water flowed. Then on 2 March, during the thirteenth of the apparitions, Bernadette told her family that the lady had said, 'a chapel should be built close to the site'. Finally, on 25 March, during her sixteenth vision, which Bernadette experienced for over an hour, she asked the lady her name, but her question was only met with a smile. Bernadette asked again, three more times, and finally the lady said, 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' During the following weeks and months, Church authorities and the French government rigorously interviewed Bernadette, and by 1862 they confirmed that she spoke the truth. Bernadette asked the local priest to build a chapel at the site of her visions and the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes is now one of the major Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. Many other chapels and churches have since been built around it, including the Basilica of St Pius X, which was opened in 1957 and can accommodate 25,000 people. It was dedicated by the future Pope John XXIII when he was the Papal Nuncio to France. Since Our Lady first caused the spring to produce clean water, 69 cures have been verified by the Lourdes Medical Bureau, and after what the Church claimed were 'extremely rigorous scientific and medical examinations' no one was able to explain what caused the cures.

In 1866 Bernadette was granted admission into the novitiate in the motherhouse at Nevers. There she completed her religious instruction and passed her remaining years in prayer and seclusion. Bernadette died on 16 April 1879 aged 35; her Feast Day is celebrated on 16 April. **Mike Bryan**

READINGS

First reading

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26

Let someone else take his office

One day Peter stood up to speak to the brothers – there were about a hundred and twenty persons in the congregation: ‘Brothers, the passage of scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David, foretells the fate of Judas, who offered himself as a guide to the men who arrested Jesus – after having been one of our number and actually sharing this ministry of ours. Now in the Book of Psalms it says:

Let someone else take his office.

‘We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was travelling round with us, someone who was with us right from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from us – and he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection.’

Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, ‘Lord, you can read everyone’s heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place.’ They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the twelve apostles.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 102(103):1-2,11-12,19-20

Second reading

1 John 4:11-16

Anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him

My dear people,
since God has loved us so much,
we too should love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
but as long as we love one another
God will live in us
and his love will be complete in us.
We can know that we are living in him

and he is living in us
because he lets us share his Spirit.
We ourselves saw and we testify
that the Father sent his Son
as saviour of the world.
If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,
God lives in him, and he in God.
We ourselves have known and put our faith in
God’s love towards ourselves.
God is love
and anyone who lives in love lives in God,
and God lives in him.

Gospel Acclamation

cf. Jn14:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord;

I will come back to you,

and your hearts will be full of joy.

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 17:11-19

Father, keep those you have given me true to your name

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

‘Holy Father,

keep those you have given me true to your name,
so that they may be one like us.

While I was with them,

I kept those you had given me true to your name.

I have watched over them

and not one is lost

except the one who chose to be lost,

and this was to fulfil the scriptures.

But now I am coming to you

and while still in the world I say these things

to share my joy with them to the full.

I passed your word on to them,

and the world hated them,

because they belong to the world

no more than I belong to the world.

I am not asking you to remove them from the world,
but to protect them from the evil one.
They do not belong to the world
any more than I belong to the world.
Consecrate them in the truth;
your word is truth.
As you sent me into the world,
I have sent them into the world,
and for their sake I consecrate myself
so that they too may be consecrated in truth.'

HOMILY Seventh Sunday of Easter 2021

Acts: 1:15-17, 20-26; 1John 4:11-16; John 17:11-19

As you are probably aware, for the past fifteen years, the English bishops have been doing the hokey cokey with Holy Days. You put the Ascension in. You take Epiphany out. In, out, you shake them all about. (Yes, I know that the hokey cokey was originally a blasphemy against the Mass, but it fits perfectly the shenanigans over Holy Days during the past decade and a half, so I think we are entitled to “spoil the Egyptians” and use it where it is helpful.) Currently, in England and Wales, the Ascension is back on the Thursday, forty days after Easter, and so today we have the readings for the 7th Sunday of Easter, which went missing for a few years. These readings today should help us prepare our hearts and minds to be more receptive of the Holy Spirit. Of course the Holy Spirit is not limited to Pentecost, or to the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The Spirit is poured out on us every day, and is the driving force of all the sacraments, but it is a wise custom to pray more fervently for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we approach the Feast which saw such powerful manifestations of the Spirit. At the same time, we must not forget that Pentecost was not the first occasion on which the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles. When the risen Christ appeared in the Upper Room on Easter Sunday evening, He breathed on the apostles and said “Receive the Holy Spirit”, giving them the power to forgive sins. That is why that Gospel is used at Pentecost, which can have the unfortunate effect of causing dozy preachers, who haven’t noticed that it

refers to Easter Sunday, to claim that the apostles were still cowering in fear at Pentecost. You and I know that such a notion is baloney. Luke makes clear, in his Ascension Day Gospel, that, after the Ascension, “they went back to Jerusalem full of joy, and were continually in the Temple praising God”. When they did meet in the Upper Room, it was to pray, in company with Our Lady, the Spirit filled woman, for a fresh gift of the Spirit. Furthermore, today’s episode of the election of Matthias is set between the Ascension and Pentecost, and involves a positive, not a fear filled group. You may have noticed that there were “about a hundred and twenty persons in the congregation”: I very much doubt that these were all crammed into the Upper Room—had they been, I suspect that the floor would have given way. The apostles at the time were in a fairly similar situation to that in which we find ourselves today, having already received the Holy Spirit, but awaiting a fresh outpouring, which would renew both them and us to proclaim the Gospel. As we continue to pray for a fuller gift of the Spirit, the First Letter of St. John reminds us of the command of mutual love, made possible by the Spirit and by God’s presence within us. As always, that letter is prompting us to examine our consciences: how fully am I living out that commandment of love? Meanwhile, today’s Gospel is an extract from the High Priestly prayer of Jesus, part of the Farewell Discourses which St. John sets in the context of the Last Supper. In this prayer, Our Lord consecrates us to the Father, and prays especially that we may live in the truth: the words “true” or “truth” occur five times in today’s Gospel. What does it mean, to be consecrated in the truth? Bear in mind that Jesus said “I am the truth”, so to be consecrated in the truth is to live in Him. In other words, the truth is something alive, brought to life by the Spirit breathing into us. We find truth set out in the words of Scripture, and in the teachings of the Church, but words on a page can remain dead. They must be brought to life in us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and by our communion with Him who is the truth.