

# 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER - MAY 9TH 2021

## St. Thomas More Parish with St. Bernadette Mission



28 King St. W., P.O. Box 238  
Millbrook, ON L0A 1G0



705-400-7888



office@stthomasmillbrook.ca



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PASTOR: FR. ANTONIO BAROL

### PLEASE PRAY FOR...

Those who are sick, especially:

Erica Perk/Shirley Kloepfer/Josef and Hermie Jandristis,  
Dolores Flood, Rio Barol and Oswaldo Bacareza.

And those who have died, especially

Bernadette Durand, Carlos Tampon and Fr. Bernie Bascal

MASS SCHEDULE: MAY 12TH – MAY 16TH

ST. THOMAS MORE RECTORY CHAPEL

WEDNESDAY : 5 PM, THURSDAY: 9 AM

ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH

FRIDAY: 5:30 PM

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**SUNDAY 9AM—10:30AM**

THE CHURCH WILL BE OPEN FOR PRIVATE WORSHIP  
(ROSARY WILL COMMENCE AT 9:00 AM)

*(MAX ATTENDANCE IN THE CHURCH - 10)*

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## FR. ANTONIO BAROL'S MESSAGE FOR THE 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Dear sisters/brothers, parishioners of St. Thomas More and St. Bernadette,  
May the grace of our Risen Lord, the love and mercy of God the Father in communion with the Holy Spirit be with you always. Last weekend Jesus assured us that if we are just one with Him, like a branch connected to the vine, we can bear fruit in abundance, but if we detach ourselves from Him, then never bear fruit, we can do nothing and will die. It is our fervent prayer that we remain in God for we are created to be with Him. Let us remember our early catechism which asked, "Why God created us?" The simple answer that we memorize and put into our heart was, "God created us in order to know him, to love him, to serve Him and to be happy with Him forever in heaven." Remember the song, "Oh dear Lord three things I pray, 'to know you more clearly, to love you more dearly, to follow you more closely...day by day.'" In this time of the pandemic God is giving us time to know him more clearly through our scripture reading, study, reflection and prayer. It is my hope that in this month of May, the month of our heavenly Mother Mary, we set aside every day a time to pray and meditate the mysteries of the Holy Rosary that she had asked during her apparition in Fatima in the year 1917, during World War 1 which spanned from July 28, 1914 to November 11, 1918. The apparition at Fatima, which started on May 13th 1917, and lasted until October 13, was just a year before the war ended. The message at Fatima is pray, pray, pray my dear children. In this time of the pandemic, the same message is echoing around the world, PRAY. As I have suggested, let us try to pray together as a parish family by setting the 8:00PM as our Rosary time. Let us feel each other's presence that we are connected as branches to the vine who is Jesus, who made His first miracle at the wedding in Cana upon his mother's request. I do believe she will do it again for us, if we humble ourselves and pray.

This weekend, the readings again are all taken from the New Testament, from the Acts of the Apostles, from the first letter and from the gospel of St. John. The letters of St. John are his written reflections on his relationship with Jesus, while the gospels are the actions of Jesus recorded by the 4 evangelists. In the first reading we hear about God's plan of saving all of humanity is now happening by welcoming the Gentiles, who at first were being denied salvation but through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Jews (the circumcised) realized that God is beyond human laws and traditions and baptism is the rite of initiation and not circumcision. The number who believed in the risen Lord grew every day to the point that the Jewish religious leaders were alarmed and so they started persecuting them.

Cont'd .../

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They started arresting the Apostles and as the saying goes, “strike the shepherd and the flock will be scattered” was their aim. We know what happened, the more they persecuted them and the more people believed in the name of Jesus and St. Paul at one point said, “They can imprison me but not the gospel.” St. Paul preached the word of God through letters, so he had many letters to the different communities which he formed while on his missionary journey. The believers being scattered was a blessing in disguise because wherever they went, they proclaimed boldly the message of the risen Lord, and with signs and miracles accompanying their preaching many were converted. To top up the Acts of the Apostles, the Church founded by Christ through Peter and the Apostles were persecuted until the time of King Constantine when he was converted to the Christian faith through his mother Queen Helena. King Constantine made a decree that the official religion of his kingdom would be Christianity. Maybe we can sum up the Acts of the Apostles by the responsorial psalm, “The Lord has revealed his victory in the sight of the nations.”

St. John’s first letter in the second reading summarizes the whole gospel message of love. He said, “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might live through him. And this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” He is warning us of our lip service for we hear people say, “I love God but does not live a loving life.” Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. This can be connected also to what Jesus said in the gospel of St. Matthew 7; 21ff. “Not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do.” A little warning to those who say, ‘faith alone’ can save. As followers of Christ we have things to do, and prayer moves us to action and our actions move us to pray, so the Benedictine monks motto is “Ora et Labora,” (to pray and to work). Many would say, I am busy and it is hard to pray and some would suggest, “When it is hard to pray when you are busy, then pray to make your busy life easy.” Trust in the Lord, we are branches of the vine and apart from Him we can do nothing. It is relaxing when you work knowing that ‘Somebody’ is guiding you.

Both the letter and the gospel of St. John have a common theme, ‘Love.’ Again the gospel being the words of Jesus he said, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.” It is very much connected to the idea of last week’s ‘the vine and the branches,’ that love is a chain of action from the Father, to the Son and to us and to the world.’ If we know how to follow this chain of action we experience the joy of living, because God (love) is the source of our joy. Let us remember St. Augustine in his search for happiness, the more he ventured other sources the more empty his life was until he abandoned everything and follow the path of service of the Lord, and then in his confessions he wrote, “My heart is restless until it rests in you my God.” All of the saints are in this path of life and if ever you are experiencing restlessness, rejoice and be glad because you are on your journey to holiness. You just need to do one thing, surrender yourself to the Lord and trust in Him. Jesus wants us to go another mile in our love when he said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” It is Mother’s day weekend and it is good to think of the love that our mothers have shown us all the way from conception to the present moment.” You are blessed if you still have your mother, to hear you say, “Thank you for all the love you gave me,” and if they are not around they sure are with us in spirit and would appreciate a little prayer in remembrance of them. There are others who are struggling in their relationship with their mothers and this would be the right moment to reach out and to forgive of whatever conflict that might have arisen in the past. We did not choose our mother, God chose her for us and for a reason, that through her many sacrifices that we did not know, we have come to know life and hopefully we come to know love also.

May this Mother’s day weekend awaken in us the love and sacrifice that our mothers did for us and this love stems from God who is love and is waiting for our loving response, through spending time in prayer and acting our prayers through the works of love. Let us also call on our heavenly Mother Mary for her intercession especially about our pandemic situation. As an assignment, try to make the Memorare prayer, part of your Holy Rosary. It is indeed a beautiful prayer invoking our heavenly Mother with confidence and hope.

Quote of the week; “In her motherly concern, the Blessed Virgin came here to Fatima...It is a mother’s sorrow that compels her to speak; the destiny of her children is at stake. For this reason, she asks the little shepherds; pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners.” (St. John Paul II)

(From the pastor’s heart)...“Thank you for all your loving support to the parish especially in this time of lockdown and they keep us going.” Rest assured that all the masses that are scheduled before the lockdown are offered when I celebrate mass privately in the rectory chapel. We have two more Fridays whereby mass will be celebrated in the church to at least accommodate 10 people and the chaplet of the Divine Mercy is prayed before mass begins. Take good care, stay safe and God bless....Fr. tony

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