

Thursday October 1st, Thursday in the Twenty-Sixth Week In Ordinary Time Year II

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 whatever it said at the top of yesterday's Message, yesterday was indeed Wednesday (not Tuesday) and today is Thursday. And White Rabbits for this first day of October.

As we continue our whistle stop reading of the book of Job 19:21-27, we find our poor guy is still in despair and has got little consolation from his three well meaning, but ultimately totally misguided, friends. *'Pity me, pity me, you, my friends.'* But despite his situation Job never loses faith, and this constantly gives him hope, as he has no fear of death. *'I know that my redeemer lives and he will take his stand on earth. And after my awakening into new life I shall look on God.'*

Now the group following Jesus has grown quite big. Earlier he had sent out his apostles. Now in Luke 10:1-12 we see seventy-two disciples being sent out into the world to reach and teach and prepare the way for the Lord. Jesus gives the disciples strict instructions about how they are to live, and how they are to react if people reject their words. Jesus begins with a prayer that there will be many more workers in the vineyard of the Lord, *'The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.'* We often use that phrase with regard to vocations to the priesthood and religious life, to which I always add, an active laity. So let's make that our prayer this morning.

*Father, in the fullness of time,
you sent your Son,
born of the Virgin Mary to be our Saviour.
He preached the good news of our salvation,
healed the sick and cast out evil.
Now as crucified and risen Lord,
he pours out on us the Holy Spirit of adoption,
making us your sons and daughters.
Through the Church, he calls us to accept the gospel
and to share in your own divine life.
Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life for all people.
In your mercy, you do not abandon us.
In every age you raise up men and women*

*to offer their lives for the sake of the gospel
and the work of the Church.*

*May we rejoice in an abundant congregation
so that we may yield a rich harvest of good works
for your honour and glory.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.*

‘Be thou my vision’, a very apt hymn today methinks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Optrm71F16s>

And this first day of October is the memorial of one of our most beloved Saints, Thérèse of Lisieux, Thérèse of the Child Jesus, the ‘Little Flower’. St. Thérèse Martin was born in Alençon in France in 1873, and aged just fifteen she entered the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux, following her two sisters there. Although she died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-four, her beautiful spiritual writings and ‘little way’ to heaven, meant that her influence has spread around the world. She was once referred to as ‘the world’s greatest missionary – who never once left her cloister.’ Therese was canonized on 17 May 1925 by Pope Pius XI, only 28 years after her death. Pope St. Pius X called her ‘the greatest saint of modern times’, and Pope St. John Paul declared her a Doctor of the Church in 1997. And along with Joan of Arc, she is Patroness of France, as well as Patron of aviators, florists, illnesses and missions. In 2015 Thérèse’s parents, Saints Louis Martin and Marie-Azélie Guérin, were canonized by Pope Francis I; they were the first spouses to be canonized together as a couple.

Here is a key quote from St. Thérèse’s famous autobiography, ‘The Story of a Soul’, emphasizing the core of her spirituality, namely, the primacy of love, or of capturing God’s heart through love:

‘But what I demand is love. I care now about one thing only – to love You, my Jesus! Great deeds are forbidden me, I cannot preach the Gospel nor shed my blood – but what does it matter? My brothers toil instead of me and I, a little child, well, I keep close by the throne of God and I love for those who fight. Love proves itself by deeds, so how am I to show my love? Well, I will scatter flowers, perfuming the Divine throne with their fragrance, and I’ll sweetly sing my hymn of love. Yes, my Beloved, that is how I will spend my short life. The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least of actions for love. I wish both to suffer and to find joy through love.’

I attach a photo of a candle I lit for my Father when I visited Lisieux a few years ago. He had a great devotion to St. Thérèse, indeed my eldest niece, his first grandchild, was named Sian Thérèse for that reason. At the time he was suffering from his third bout of cancer, and died a few weeks after this

candle was lit for him. God rest him. If you look carefully in the background you can see the exhumed body of St. Thérèse

*O God, who open your kingdom
to those who are humble and to little ones.
lead us to follow trustingly in the little way of St. Thérèse,
so that through her intercession
we may see your eternal glory revealed.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Selina Smith, whose funeral I will celebrate this afternoon at Carleton. *May she rest in the peace of Christ.*

And have a lovely first day of October.

Saturday evening's mass was recorded, and is available for the week on the YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdHv0p8amIk&feature=youtu.be>

with texts being available at <http://universalis.com/mass.htm>

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). Any suggestions for ways to keep our faith and spirits up at this time are most welcome!

And remember, St. Bernadette's is not closed, though the building is, most of the time. 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.

Fr. P.