

Wednesday November 4<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday in the Thirty-First Week of 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.

So tomorrow we enter lockdown and sadly public services will cease throughout November. We've been through this before and we can get through it again, through lots of private prayer and mutual support, and making sure we keep in contact with one another. Let's pray that a month's lockdown does its job, and we can properly celebrate Advent and Christmas together. Don't forget we have our **final public mass of November this evening at 7pm in Church.**

*The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked. (John 20.19)*

*Ever present God,*

*be with us in our isolation,*

*be close to us in our distancing,*

*be healing in our sickness,*

*be joy in our sadness,*

*be light in our darkness,*

*be wisdom in our confusion,*

*be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,*

*that when the doors reopen*

*we may with the zeal of Pentecost*

*inhabit our communities*

*and speak of your goodness*

*to an emerging world.*

*Through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

St. Paul is very encouraging to the Philippians today. In Philippians 2:12-18 he calls on them to keep on doing what he has asked them to do. It is God who brings all this to fruition in you. Without any murmuring, show yourselves to be blameless and pure, the spotless children in this warped world of ours and as a result 'you will shine in the world like bright stars.'

In today's Gospel, Luke 14:25-33 Jesus calls us to be realistic if you want to be a follower of his, because it is not easy, and in following him families may be divided. But once committed you must not turn back, but keep your hand to the plough.

*I want my heart to be steadfast Lord, and not tossed about by circumstances.  
I want my hand to hold steady to the plough, moving forward with eyes focused on You,  
ploughing the fields, planting the seeds, and reaping the harvest for Your glory.*

*I have work to do - Your work - and don't want to let You down.*

*I want to glorify You with my life.*

*But Lord, I need Your help.*

*I must go forward in Your strength, and not my own,  
for the burdens are too great to carry.*

*Help me kneel before You and roll these burdens from my back over to the foot of the cross.*

*Help me go forward in the power and authority of Your Name, Christ our Lord. Amen.*

It's not a hymn we often sing, but how about 'Onward Christian Soldiers'?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa\\_qE3hpVas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa_qE3hpVas)

And today is the memorial of St. Charles Borromeo, who like St. Martin yesterday is a saint for this time of pandemic. He was born into a noble family at Arona on the shores of Lake Maggiore in Italy in 1538. His uncle was Pope Pius IV, and, as it's known what you know it's who you know, his rise in the Church was rapid. At the age of only twelve he was granted a tonsure, the haircut that shows your devotion to Christ, and at twenty-one he was made a Cardinal even though he hadn't even been ordained! He was finally ordained at the age of 34 when he became Archbishop of Milan. St. Charles was a great administrator, and as Archbishop he founded seminaries, improved training for priests, stamped out ecclesiastical bribery, improved preaching and catechetical instruction, and combated widespread religious superstition. He also became widely loved by the faithful for his personal generosity and heroism in combating a devastating famine and plague of 1576 - we could certainly do with him now. He died in Milan at the age of just forty-six after his brief but intense life of work and prayer. Devotion to St. Charles began immediately, and he was canonized in 1610. As Patron Saint he can be invoked for any number of things: against ulcers; apple orchards; bishops; catechists; catechumens; colic; intestinal disorders; seminarians; spiritual directors; spiritual leaders; starch makers; and stomach diseases. This is one of St. Charles's own prayers:

*Almighty God, you have generously made known to human beings the mysteries of  
your life through Jesus Christ your Son in the Holy Spirit.*

*Enlighten my mind to know these mysteries which your Church treasures and teaches.*

*Move my heart to love them and my will to live in accord with them.*

*Give me the ability to teach this Faith to others without pride,  
without ostentation, and without personal gain.*

*Let me realize that I am simply your instrument for bringing others to the knowledge  
of the wonderful things you have done for all your creatures.*

*Help me to be faithful to this task that you have entrusted to me.*

*Amen.*

And Eileen has made me a very suitable bobble hat for the cold winter chills. Cheers, Eileen!

Have a good day, and let's get through the next month together

Sunday morning's Mass was videoed and is available for the week on the YouTube at  
and texts for Mass each day can be found at <http://www.universalis.com/>

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.