

Thursday November 5th, Thursday 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 welcome to Lockdown II. At least we are allowed to have the Church open for private prayer, so, with the thanks to our volunteer stewards the Church will be open from **12noon to 1pm every day** for private prayer. There will be various prayer leaflets left at the back of Church for you to take. Please do drop in. And let us pray for each other in these times, and also seek to reach out to each other, especially the lonely and isolated, in whatever way we can.

*God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

In our first reading today, Philippians 3:3-8 Paul speaks on a subject he comes back to many times, indeed he focuses on it in the first Council of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts of the Apostles – whether you have to follow Jewish rituals before you can become a Christian, particularly with regards to circumcision. Paul reminds his readers that he knows all about the Jewish faith and even went so far as to persecute the Christians until he got to know Jesus Christ the Lord. We are not a people who believe in mere external ritual – mortification of the heart, not the flesh.

And in Luke 15:1-10 Jesus goes on to tell the parable of the lost sheep and the lost silver pieces. There is rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner. Let us thank God for forgiveness, and repent before we do so. Here is Palm 51, which neatly sums up both St. Paul and Jesus say in today's readings.

*Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness
in your abundant compassion blot out my offence.
Wash away all my guilt; from my sin cleanse me.
For I know my offence; my sin is always before me.
Against you alone have I sinned.*

*Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure;
wash me, make me whiter than snow.
Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Turn away your face from my sins; blot out all my guilt.
A clean heart create for me, God; renew in me a steadfast spirit.
Do not drive me from your presence, nor take from me your holy spirit.
Restore my joy in your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit.
Rescue me from death, God, my saving God,
that my tongue may praise your healing power.
Lord, open my lips; my mouth will proclaim your praise.
For you do not desire sacrifice; a burnt offering you would not accept.
My sacrifice, God, is a broken spirit;
God, do not spurn a broken, humbled heart.*

And for a hymn today let's freely, freely sing 'God Forgave My Sin In Jesus' Name'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFV00VeKdlw>

And in the midst of all this gloom, we have some happy news!

Firstly, today Jack Rhodes is celebrating his 99th birthday! Many happy returns, Jack, and we all look forward to celebrating your 100th next November 5th!

Secondly, congratulations to Jennifer and Chris Hilton on the birth of their lovely daughter Lucie Jane, a little sister for Jack, who will make an excellent big brother. Yesterday for the children's video this morning, I did a little prayer about growing, which, with such lovely news, seems appropriate.

Today let's say it for Lucie, and for all our little ones:

*May you grow in strength, little one,
And use your strength for good.
May you grow in knowledge, little one,
And temper it with wisdom.
May you grow in faith, little one,
And learn to trust in God.
May you grow in love, little one,
And walk in it all your days.
Amen.*

I attach a still from the video – surrounded by a friend of mine’s plants, which provided the inspiration for a prayer about growing (above me they are actually ‘grow lights’ which simulate the sun’s rays in bad weather).

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Margaret Metcalfe whose funeral I will be celebrating at Carleton Crematorium at 11am this morning. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

I hope you are all able to make the best of the day, gunpowder, treason, plot and all.

Sunday morning’s Mass was videoed and is available for the week on the YouTube at

<https://youtu.be/63XLnffSIDY>

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. 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.