

Wednesday December 9<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday in the Second Week of Advent

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.

Busy morning here at St. Bernadette's – an 8:30am Morning Mass, followed by Mass in school for years 1 and 2, followed by a Requiem for dear Marian at 10:30am. So I'd better get on with the message.

Both readings for today are very comforting, which is maybe something we all need right now. The Jews felt abandoned by God in exile. Isaiah gives them hope of deliverance. Look up and see the myriads of stars, he says in Isaiah 40:25-31, all were created by God. *'The Lord is an everlasting God... those who hope in the Lord run and do not grow weary, walk and never tire.'*

And Jesus has an equally encouraging message in Matthew 11:28-30 for those who feel overburdened by life. *'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest.'* It's such a beautiful invitation to lay all our difficulties and troubles at the feet of Jesus, *'My yoke is easy and my burden light.'* And what a lot of troubles the past nine months have brought us all. Let's place the coming year firmly in the hands of Our Lord.

*Lord, when my heart is overburdened, overwhelm me with Your peace.*

*Lead me to You, my rock.*

*Guide me to Your Word which gives me strength and refuge.*

*Help me not to run to lesser things.*

*Draw me to run to You first.*

*Help me get into the habit of taking my burdens*

*and placing them on your shoulders,*

*I a spirit of prayer, and faith, and peace.*

*Thank You, Lord.*

*Amen.*

'O Let All Who Thirst, Let Them Come To The Water' for a very soothing and restful hymn today.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEqCgMmV7n0>

Today's Saint is Mexican, St. Juan Diego who was born near Mexico City in 1474, and converted to Catholicism in middle age. He had to walk many miles to get to Mass, but always did so willing and cheerfully. Walking to Mass on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 1531, The Blessed Virgin appeared to him on

Mount Tepeyac, and when the local Bishop asked for a sign Our Lady left a miraculous imprint of her image on his cloak. There is more to this story, but I'll tell you that on Saturday when we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

*O God, who by means of Saint Diego  
showed the love of the most holy virgin for your people,  
grant, through his intercession,  
that, by following the counsels our Mother gave at Guadalupe,  
we may be ever constant in fulfilling your will.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

It seems a lifetime ago but earlier this year I was with my Australian family and my mate Fr. Ed in Mexico, in Cozumel, a little island off the eastern coast of Mexico. I never imagined I would ever get there, and it's even harder to imagine now. We had a trip out to the famous ruins of Tulum. Centred on a soaring Castillo temple fringed by snaking stone walls, the relics once made up a flourishing Mayan port, and afterwards we were taken to a beautiful sandy beach where we had the Mexican delicacy of chips, nachos and ketchup (you can take the boy out of Wetherspoons, but you can't take Wetherspoons out of the boy). Naturally we did some Tequila tasting, which was jolly fun – well, from what I can remember. Well, when in Mexico, and all that. It was a lovely day, and I attach a couple of pics.

And a Happy Birthday to my brother, Martin, in Hong Kong. Ad multos annos!

Please pray for the repose of the soul of our dear friend Marian Hocking, whose Requiem Mass I will be celebrating today. Many of you will know Marian from her wonderful reading, generally at 6pm Mass on Saturday's and Tuesday lunchtimes. Marian loved reading, and always seemed to read with passion and gusto. Normally I would ask the reader at the Easter Vigil to read the shorter form of the creation as it can seem to go on forever, but I would always have Marian read the longer version, as it was so beautiful to hear. She also beautifully narrated Our Lady's voice in the 'Stations of the Cross with Mary' two mother's day ago. We'll miss her voice, but I'm privileged to read for her at her requiem Mass. *May she rest in the pace and love of Christ.* And our thoughts and prayers are with Cathy and all her family.

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.