

Monday October 12th, Monday In The Twenty-Eighth 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.

Well I hope everyone had a lovely weekend. I popped into Cleveleys on Sunday afternoon, hoping to film the children's video prayer on the prom, but the wind put paid to that, so I filmed it in the garden here at SB's when I got back. I did manage coffee and toast at Costa though. Who'd've ever thought you need to take out a mortgage for a latte? Jolly good, though.

This week we have three more days of St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians and Paul has really developed his teaching against the Judaizers, those who believe you should Jewish customs in order to become a Christian. In Galatians 4:22-24. 26-27. 31-5:1 he uses an allegory or parallel with the biblical story of Abraham and his two sons. The first was born of his slave-girl, Hagar, and the second from God's promise to his wife Sarah. The first tried to punish the second and was eventually dispossessed. No longer are we slaves to the law, but are free due to the promise of God. Christ freed us, so we remain free - we will not submit to the yoke of slavery again.

In this morning's Gospel, Luke 11:29-32, Jesus rebukes the wicked generation for asking for a sign. The only sign will be that of Jonah, and the Ninevites repented when Jonah preached. The Queen of the South came from a great distance to hear the Wisdom of Solomon. There is something greater than both Jonah and the Queen of the South, but sadly the huge crowd that has gathered still don't recognise Jesus as the Messiah.

Dear loving Lord, who are you?

Do I really know you?

Or are you just a concept, a wise man from the past?

What does it mean, O Lord, to truly know you?

Help me to open myself, to take the risk and surrender.

If my heart is closed I can never know anyone.

Let me understand that all the stories about you are true;

your teaching, how you healed,

when you cried for your friends,

the depth of your prayer,

how the whip cracked on your back,

how much you bled for me.

*Transform my heart to know your word is true and you are faithful,
and, yes, you came back for me, back from the dead.
Let me know all this was for me,
since you love me and I am yours.
May your truth sink deep into my heart and soul.
Let me know you, O Jesus,
and love you as my Saviour and my Lord.
Amen.*

Let today's hymn be an old favourite 'Amazing Grace', grateful as we are for the grace of knowing Jesus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG0vH4WYChQ>

As I said last week, this week we have a couple of early English Saints to celebrate, and the first is Saint Wilfred, who comes from the middle of the seventh century. He was educated at Lindisfarne in Northumbria, and spent some time in Rome. He was particularly keen on making sure that the Church in England was properly reproducing the liturgical practices of the Church in Rome, rather than the Irish practices which had brought down from Iona. At the Synod of Whitby in the year 664 (I wonder if they had scampi for lunch) he insisted that Roman ways should be followed because this was where the apostles Saints Peter and Paul had 'lived, taught, suffered, and are buried', and whatever the case, no one has authority over Peter (and thus his successors, the bishops of Rome). It all got very heated. He took charge of the Monastery at Ripon, and eventually became Bishop of York. Unfortunately he had many quarrels with the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and this led to his exile and five years missionary work in Sussex and on the Isle of Wight. He was buried in the monastery at Ripon, though his remains were later taken to Canterbury Cathedral. The collect (the opening prayer) for his mass is particularly beautiful I think.

*Lord God, who set your servant Saint Edward
upon the throne of an earthly realm
and inspired him with zeal for the Kingdom of Heaven,
grant, we pray,
that we may faithfully serve you in this life
and with him inherit your eternal glory.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

We often think of missionaries as going to Africa or wherever, but Wilfred was a missionary in Sussex. Once England was missionary territory, and perhaps it is now...

Well news from my brother in Hong Kong – he's had a very busy weekend. It was his monthly 'Date Night' with my sister-in-law on Friday (aww, 35 years together and counting), followed by a

celebration for Canadian Thanksgiving on Saturday, which is actually today, the observance of the second Monday in October as 'a day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed.' And tonight he is going to the Cantonese Opera. One of his friends produces the operas, and his wife is actually in the show (the wife of his friend, not my sister in law) (and she is on the poster I attach, again, the wife of the friend, not my sister in law). The opera is about Pan Jin Lian who is married to Wu Dalang, elder brother of the eventual Liangshan chieftain, Wu Song. The elder Wu is short and ugly, whereas Pan is renowned for her beauty; as a result, people always feel that the couple is a mismatch. Pan Jin Lian's neighbours jeer at her, calling her a flower planted in cow dung. Her affair with a wealthy and good-looking womanizer in town leads her to murder her husband, and to her ultimate execution by her brother-in-law, Wu Song. It's EastEnders basically. If you want to know what it sounds like check out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0-8Fp1VB4w> and then imaging him sitting through four hours of it. And this is the man who walked out of 'Phantom of the Opera'!

Rainy start to the day, but let's hope it gets better, and let's see what BoJo will announce. Have the best day you possibly can.

Sunday morning's mass was recorded (and I am *definitely* perkier than I am at 5pm in the afternoon) and thanks to our techno wizard Ian is available on the YouTube at <https://youtu.be/BGYDUVLTzYo>
Texts for each day can be found 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.