

Thursday November 12<sup>th</sup>, Thursday in the Thirty-Second 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.

*'This is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a prisoner of Jesus Christ.'* Today our first reading is an extract from St. Paul's letter to Philemon 7-20. This is the only private letter of St Paul that we possess. It seems that a slave of Philemon, Onesimus, had escaped and found his way to Rome, where he became a Christian. Paul tries to send him back, and asks Philemon to be generous to Onesimus, recognizing the grace of Christ and the blessing of St. Paul with which he returns.

*'Brother, I am counting on you, in the Lord.'*

In today's Gospel, Luke 17:20-25, Jesus reminds the Pharisees that they do not know when the Son of Man is coming in glory, but that *'first The Son of Man must suffer grievously and be rejected by his generation,'* prophesying his own passion:

*By the nails through hands and feet;*

*By your parched lips;*

*By your ears filled with mockery and scorn;*

*By the forgiveness of your foes;*

*By your promise to the repentant thief;*

*By your love to your dear disciple;*

*By your broken heart;*

*By your soul all alone;*

*By your spirit commended to your Father;*

*By your death;*

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

Today we have had a hymn request, 'Let There Be Peace On Earth' and I'm happy to oblige

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkQeevnuZK4>

And today we have the memorial of St. Josaphat. Josaphat was born in the Ukraine in 1580 and belonged to the Eastern Orthodox church. He became a Catholic and joined a Basilian monastery, who follow the rule of St. Basil the Great. Later he was ordained and became the Bishop of Polock. He spent his life working for the reform of the Church and unity between the East and the West, the Ukrainian Eastern Orthodox Church and Rome. He faced much opposition, though, including from

some members of the Church hierarchy, and was martyred by an angry mob of enemies in 1623. He said, as he was dying, 'Grant that I be found worthy, Lord, to shed my blood for the union and obedience to the Apostolic See.' This is a prayer from an old Ukrainian Rite prayer book:

*O Saint Josaphat,  
wonderful Saint and heroic martyr for the union of our Church with the Vicar of Christ,  
the Pope of Rome.  
Thou art glorious on account of thy zeal in the propagation  
of the true Catholic faith among our people.  
Thou art wonderful because of thy heroic martyrdom for the unity of faith of our people  
with the Holy See of Rome, the true centre of orthodox Catholicism  
Since thou art so powerful with God as thy miracles prove  
I ask thee to obtain for me from Jesus and Mary a strong attachment to the Catholic faith  
and my beautiful Eastern Rite which I shall never betray nor abandon.  
Obtain also the grace of indefatigable zeal that I may labour  
for the reunion of my separated Eastern Brethren.  
Amen.*

I did wonder, as I do and probably shouldn't, whether Josaphat was the origin of the phrase 'Jumping Josaphat' used by Yosemite Sam in the Bugs Bunny cartoons, but the phrase is actually 'Jumping Jehoshaphat', the biblical King, who, ironically was actually known for his stillness and thoughtfulness, so to have him jumping would be quite unusual, hence the phrase. And I probably have too much time on my hands...

Anyway, I spent most of yesterday morning in the school memorial garden, with each class coming out for a Remembrance Day Service, which included the Last Post and the Silence. The children did so well, reading their poems and planting poppies that they had made. At the end of each service I talked about why we have statues and said a prayer of the blessing over the new statue of St. Bernadette. It's absolutely beautiful, and quite poignant as she holds some poppies.

*Almighty everlasting God,  
who do not forbid us to carve or paint likenesses of your saints,  
in order that whenever we look at them with our bodily eyes  
we may call to mind their holy lives,  
and resolve to follow in their footsteps;  
may it please you to bless and to make holy this statue,  
which has been made in memory and honour of blessed Bernadette of Lourdes.  
And grant that all who in its presence pay devout homage to Bernadette  
may by her merits and intercession*

*obtain your grace in this life and everlasting glory in the life to come;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

I've got to say that standing outside for an hour and half in a force nine gale was not the jolliest way to spend a morning - it was freezing, but most definitely well worth it! I'm only just warming up now! But I have to say again how great our children were, and our family representatives from the armed forces, Mr. and Mrs. Dukes, and Mr. Sillcock.

My best mate Fr. Ed in Lincoln sent me a link to a service their deanery virtual choir had put together for Remembrance Day. He's allowing me to share the link, and you might like to pop into it. It's beautiful. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJyLFKuKy30&feature=youtu.be>  
Would that our deanery or diocese had done anything approaching such a project.

Apparently we are going to have a couple of nice days before some rain heads in from the East, so let's make the most of it! I may see you on the prom! Have a great day.

Mass for Remembrance Sunday was recorded and is available on the YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROq2OZfeDhE&feature=youtu.be>  
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.