

Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 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.

And so we come to our third weekend of Advent.

Turning away from the Book of Isaiah, today we have a passage from the Book of Wisdom or Sirach 48:1-4. 9-11 which gives us a reference to the prophet Elijah. Like John the Baptist, his job was to allay God's wrath before the fury broke. Many times in the Gospels people consider John to be the reincarnation of the Prophet Elijah.

And following on from that, in Matthew 17:10-13 Jesus compares John to Elijah - just as Elijah was not recognised neither would John be. Like Elijah and John, Jesus himself would suffer at the hands of the people, and the disciples realise that Jesus is talking about John the Baptist.

*Almighty God,  
by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born,  
and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Saviour  
by the preaching of repentance:  
lead us to repent according to his preaching  
and, after his example,  
constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice,  
and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

I think this lovely version of 'How Lovely On The Mountain Are The Feet Of Hymn' would make an appropriate hymn for today. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDt4tq0r6gE>

And today we have the memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1531, The Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Juan Diego in Mexico, as I told you on Wednesday when we celebrated his memorial, and when his Bishop asked for a sign, she left an image of herself imprinted upon his cloak. Well this image was placed in a magnificent shrine at Guadalupe, where it became an object of great devotion, and encouraged the devotion of the Mexican nation towards the Mother of

God. Many miracles have been attributed to her intercession, and Our Lady of Guadalupe was named as ‘Queen of Mexico and Empress of the Americas.’ I found this beautiful prayer for her intercession that was written especially for this time of Pandemic.

*Holy Virgin of Guadalupe,  
Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.  
We fly to you today as your beloved children.  
We ask you to intercede for us with your Son,  
as you did at the wedding in Cana.  
Pray for us, loving Mother,  
and gain for our nation and world,  
and for all our families and loved ones,  
the protection of your holy angels,  
that we may be spared the worst of this illness.  
For those already afflicted,  
we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.  
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful,  
wipe away their tears and help them to trust.  
In this time of trial and testing,  
teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind.  
Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.  
We come to you with confidence,  
knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother,  
health of the sick and cause of our joy.  
Shelter us under the mantle of your protection,  
keep us in the embrace of your arms,  
help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus.  
Amen.*

Let's have a second hymn today, 'Hail Queen of Heaven.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOfnJ5an1W0>

And here's one more jolly photo from Mexico with my niece and nephew, taken on our stop off there in January. A long time ago...!

Don't forget to book in for Christmas masses, and remember that whilst we do now have our Public Masses, the Church is open from 12noon to 1pm on Sundays, for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, during which I will be in the Sacristy if anyone wants the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Hope you are all having the best weekend you can.

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.