

Friday November 13th, Friday 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.

And here we are and already it's Friday again, and the thirteenth at that. *Paddy says to Mick, 'Christmas is on a Friday this year.' Mick says 'Let's hope it's not the 13th.'* And Christmas is indeed on Friday in just six short weeks' time. Let's continue to pray that all lockdown restrictions can be lifted for our celebrations.

As well as writing his Gospel and the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse), St. John also wrote three short pastoral letters, which we will hear extracts from today and tomorrow. Today's extract, 2 John 4-9, is from the second. Love is the central theme, and the best weapon for combatting heresy. *'To love is to live according to the his commandments; this is the commandment which you have heard since the beginning, to live a life of love.'*

And in the Gospel, Lk 17:26-37, as we approach the last few days of the Church's year we have a reference to The Last Day, for which the Lord calls us always to be ready. Jesus mentions the days of Noah and Lot and how unprepared people were.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
true light of the world,
you guide all mankind to salvation.
Give us the courage, strength and grace
to build a world of justice and peace,
ready for the coming of that kingdom where
you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

When is he coming? Let's make that our hymn today 'When Is He Coming, the Redeemer?'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxtuW1tLO8I>

And in the International Liturgical Calendar, today's saint is Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini. Maria Cabrini was born in Italy, the youngest of 13 children, only four of whom survived to adulthood. She was determined from her childhood to make religious work her life's vocation. In 1877 she took her vows and changed her name in honour of St. Francis Xavier, the patron saint of missionaries; soon after, she became known as Mother Cabrini. She founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart

in 1880, which served orphans and offered education to the poor. She planned to found a convent in China, but Pope Leo XIII directed her to 'go west, not east,' and she sailed with a small group of sisters for the United States in 1889. Their work in the United States was to be concentrated among the neglected Italian immigrants. She became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1909. Although plagued by ill health most of the time, Mother Cabrini established many schools, hospitals, and orphanages. She died on December 22nd, 1917, and was canonized on July 7th 1946, the first United States citizen to be canonized. She is Patron Saint of Immigrants, and this is her prayer:

*Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, woman of God, disciple of Christ,
you offered the people you met the gifts of life and love
by responding to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs in practical and creative ways.
Inspired by your confidence in God and your compassion, love and sense of justice,
we ask you to accompany us as we work to respond to the urgent needs
of our sisters and brothers fleeing their home countries in search of refuge and peace.
Teach us. Pray for us. Amen.*

And today is Friday 13th, eek! Both Fridays and the number thirteen have long both to be considered unlucky, so if you put them together you get double trouble, I guess. Many think that the reason for the number 13's bad luck comes from the Bible, as Judas, who betrayed Jesus, is thought to have been the 13th guest to sit down to the Last Supper. And in Norse mythology, a dinner party of the gods was ruined by the 13th guest called Loki, who caused the world to be plunged into darkness. It seems the superstition has stuck. Some hotels will have no room 13, while a lot of tall buildings 'don't have' a 13th floor, jumping straight from 12 to 14. Some airlines also refuse to have a row 13 in their planes too, as people refuse to book seats there.

For hundreds of years, Friday has been considered the unluckiest day of the week. In Geoffrey Chaucer's famous Canterbury Tales, written in the 14th Century, he says '*and on a Friday fell all this mischance*'. In Britain, Friday was once known as Hangman's Day because it was usually when people who had been condemned to death would be hanged. If you're born on Good Friday you're thought to be lucky, while sailors, who are notoriously superstitious, would sometimes begin a long voyage on Good Friday because of its holy connections.

The combination of Friday and the number 13 as a day of particularly bad luck seems to be a relatively recent tradition - perhaps only about 100 years old. There's even a special word for the fear of Friday 13th - *paraskevidekatriaphobia*. And while we're on the subject *hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia* is the fear of long words... But you shouldn't be superstitious about Friday the 13th. It brings bad luck. And talking of black cats...

Have a lovely end to the week, and a lovely start to the weekend.

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.