

Wednesday October 14th, Wednesday 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.

I hope we are all well and safe. A dear parishioner delivered me a lovely corned beef hash and jar of beetroot last night, which was absolutely delicious, although the fact that the beetroot was 'hot and spicy' rather took my tongue by surprise, and is only just recovering this morning!

We come to the last extract from the letter to the Galatians 5:18-25. The last passage we have is the best in my opinion. We are free because of Christ, now because of slavishly following the ancient law. But this does not mean we are free to indulge in the lower side of human nature. Those who indulge in fornication, indecency, idolatry, feuds, envy, etc., cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The Spirit brings love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. So we must crucify all self-indulgent passions. This is the very first Psalm from King David's Book of Psalms:

*Happy indeed is the man
who follows not the counsel of the wicked;
nor lingers in the way of sinners
nor sits in the company of scorners,
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord
and who ponders his law day and night.
He is like a tree that is planted
beside the flowing waters,
that yields its fruit in due season
and whose leaves shall never fade;
and all that he does shall prosper.
Not so are the wicked, not so!
For they like winnowed chaff
shall be driven away by the wind.
When the wicked are judged they shall not stand,
nor find room among those who are just;
for the Lord guards the way of the just
but the way of the wicked leads to doom.*

And in Luke 11:42-46 Jesus continues his tirade against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the lawyers. *'You are like unmarked tombs that men walk on without knowing it!'* When a lawyer confronts Jesus for insulting them, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter telling him, *'You load on men burdens that are unendurable, burdens that you yourselves do not move a finger to life.'*

And for a Saint today we have Callistus I, a former slave who became Bishop of Rome in 217. He fought heresy and preached God's mercy for repentant sinners, despite meeting much criticism from people who wanted to focus on more rigorous aspects of Christianity. He's best remembered for having one of the catacombs of Rome named after him, where many victims of anti-Christian persecution are buried, which is referenced in this prayer:

*O God, who raised up Pope St. Callistus the First
to serve the Church,
and attend devotedly to Christ's faithful departed,
strengthen us, we pray, by his witness to the faith,
so that, rescued from the slavery of corruption,
we may merit an incorruptible inheritance.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And to cheer ourselves up today, let's sing 'Shine, Jesus, Shine'. It doesn't get any jollier.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gr5Y63bDNNg>

So my brother in Hong Kong had his night at the Cantonese Opera. He said that it was technically stunning, an absolute feast for the eyes, but musically somewhat challenging to his Western ears. He added that my sister-in-law and her friend giggled like schoolgirls throughout the funny bits. There was a bit of a to-do on stage at the end as his friend's husband did himself a mischief during a particularly acrobatic leap and landing – as you can see in the photo. The theatre was as full as it could be with its added covid restrictions – which makes me hope that somehow theatres will re-open here, and I do believe that Blackpool Grand has received a grant to help it keep running, which is great news. I attach some photos he took of the performance – and it does look amazing. Fortunately he was able to recover the next day as his school was closed due to a typhoon. Seriously. Typhoons, as I'm sure you know, are the tropical cyclone with winds exceeding 74 mph in the western Pacific Ocean, the equivalent of a hurricane. The name 'typhoon' means 'big wind', so incidentally, just in case you are ever caught up in a typhoon, this is the official, and very lovely, prayer:

*Lord God, I pray that You keep safe and warm our families and loved ones.
I ask that You send your angels, people, and timely practical help to those who may be
affected by the typhoon. Please prevent it from causing more damage and tragedies in our nation.
Please make the sun shine again, Heavenly Father.*

At this difficult times, may You encourage those who are fearful and suffering right now with your comforting and healing love. And may You eventually turn their trials into triumphs.

In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.

For the children's prayer video this morning I told them all about by brother's typhoon, and read the prayer then talked about how 'storm' can refer to a difficulty we have, and read the prayer again substituting the word 'typhoon' with 'coronavirus'. It makes for a very moving prayer. Try it yourself.

Please pray for the repose of the soul Tony McNickle, whose funeral service I will be celebrating in Church at 1:30pm this afternoon. *May he rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Have the best day you can, and watch out for typhoons.

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.