

Tuesday December 14<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday in the Third Week in 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.

Lovely day to be waking up to! And looking forward to seeing some of you at our noonday mass. And tonight I will be recording an Advent Bereavement Service for Hollowells. It is not being streamed live (I don't think), but will be able to be accessed on the internet, so I will let you know how it goes.

We have an extract from the prophet Zephaniah this morning - he is looking forward to the day when the people are taken away from their sins and from sinful people, very much in the spirit of the Prophet Isaiah. *'Trouble is coming to this tyrannical city.'* When the Messiah comes the insincere, the rebellious, the defiled, those who will not listen to the Lord, they will be taken away. 'God says, I will give the people lips that are clean; you will do no wrong, will tell no lies. You will be able to rest with no one to disturb you.' Only then, Zephaniah 3:1-2.9-13, tells us there will be peace and contentment; *'they will be able to graze and rest with no one to disturb them.'*

We hear about John the Baptist once more. In Luke 7:19-23 again the chief priests and elders closed their eyes to his message, and Jesus tells them the Parable of the Two Sons. The Pharisees were like the son who said he would do what his father ordered, but did what he wanted instead, while the son who originally said he would not go to work in the fields thought better about it and obeyed his Father and did the job he was asked to do. Sincerity of heart is what really counts. They were too blind to see that even public sinners repented after John's preaching, but they would not accept John.

*God, our heavenly Father,  
grant me sincerity of heart,  
and the willingness to follow your call.  
By grace of baptism you have called me your child,  
may your will, not mine be done ,  
and may all my words and actions  
be pleasing in your sight.  
Through Christ our Lord,  
Amen.*

And let's sing one of our favourites, 'Guide Me, O Thy Great Redeemer' as we seek the guidance of all the prophets, John the Baptist and the Redeemer himself to guide us through this season of Advent, and through the Covid times we are living in. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ofp6rdAgRrY>

And today's Saint is St. Maria di Rosa and very appropriate for our Covid times as she lived and nursed her way through a cholera epidemic. Born in 1813, in Brescia, since she was a young girl Maria was always very concerned about the poor and sick. She regularly visited the women and child factory workers who lived in appalling conditions, also visiting the hospital each day to visit patients. She took a particular interest in the deaf. At the age of 27 she established her own religious order. War broke out with Austria in 1849 and the sisters worked night and day, nursing the injured and caring for displaced families. In 1852 there was an outbreak of cholera which decimated the population. Maria di Rosa personally cared for hundreds of people throughout the epidemic, and died, it is said, of exhaustion, in 1855. She was just 42. She was canonised in 1954. She once said, *'I can't go to bed with a quiet conscience if during the day I've missed any chance, however slight, of preventing wrongdoing or of helping to bring about some good.'* Perhaps we should all try and make that our motto!

*Lord God,*

*grant me the grace to see all human beings as potential persons in whom You dwell.*

*And let me respect them because of You my God.*

*Let me see the Face of Your Son in all.*

*Teach me to follow Christ who is my Lord and Redeemer*

*and see His presence in all,*

*as St Maria di Rosa did, for love of You.*

*St Maria di Rosa, Pray for us. Amen*

And over in Australia my nephew, Paddy, has received an early Christmas present. Giving the fact that he is around six foot tall, you can gauge that that is one monster of a tuba! How do you fix a broken tuba? With a tuba glue, of course! If you are ever working on being more decisive and find yourself wanting to get a tuba, a trombone, and a round-bottomed dish, but you can only afford two of them and the dish will fit under your shirt, just remember: take the bowl, buy the horns. Two more for the Christmas Crackers. I'll get my coat.

Have a good day y'all, whatever you happen to be doing!

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.