

Tuesday November 17th, Tuesday in the Thirty-Third 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.

Early morning message, as I have 8:30am mass, then straight into school for mass with Year 5, followed by a Q&A on baptism with Year 3. Busy morning!

John continues his letters to the main churches. We have two today, in Revelations 3:1-6, 14-22, one to Sardis and the other to Laodicea. Sardis was a wealthy city built on the top of a steep rock or hill, but it was a degenerate city, spiritually dead. Everyone is told to 'watch'. The other city was Laodicea. They were lukewarm. 'Because you are neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth.' The call to listen and watch firmly echoes the teaching of Jesus, as John says, 'If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to what the spirit is saying to the Churches.'

And in Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus becomes the special host for Jesus. He overcame his shortness, climbing up the tree to look to look for Christ. His encounter with the Lord changes his whole life, as he commits himself to making reparation for his sins. As Jesus says to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house... for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

*Like Zacchaeus, help us, O God,
to lose our fear of stepping outside our place,
of doing things differently,
of seeking Christ in our lives.
Christ's invitation awaits us
to start anew,
to make amends,
to live in Christ's way.
God of change and renewal,
we give thanks for your love
that makes this possible
for each one of us.
Amen.*

For today's hymn let's sing 'Lord Of All Hopefulness' grateful for all God gives us
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8mti7VL3gg> And here's one for the children:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mV8wFANochY>

And today's Saint is Elizabeth of Hungary. Elizabeth was the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary. Born in 1207 she grew up a very religious child and married Ludwig, the king of Thuringia (in Germany), when she was only 14 and had three children. As queen, Elizabeth built two hospitals to help her people. Each day, she gave thick crusty bread to hundreds of poor people. Ludwig died of the plague when Elizabeth was 20. She had vowed that if anything happened to her husband, she would only serve God, and so helped build more hospitals and devoted herself to caring for the sick. Elizabeth wore herself out with her good works, and in 1231, at the age of only 23, she died. Pope Gregory IX canonized her on May 27, 1235. Because she gave so much life-giving bread to the hungry, Elizabeth is the patron saint of bakers, as well as beggars, brides, charities, death of children, homeless people, hospitals, and widows. St. Elizabeth has been praised by Pope Benedict XVI as a 'model for those in authority.'

*O God, by whose gift Saint Elizabeth of Hungary
recognised and revered Christ in the poor,
grant, through her intercession,
that we may serve with unfailing charity
the needy and those afflicted.
Through your son, Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And having discussed haggis yesterday for Margaret of Scotland, for Elizabeth of Hungary here's me many years ago (pre beard) embarking on a plate of Hungarian goulash with dumplings. As you can see I only have eyes for it! It was jolly good, and though Hungarian food, I was actually in Prague!

Popping back to Zacchaeus, we are told he was 'too short and could not see for the crowd,' and so is actually one of the few people in the Bible of whom we are given some idea of their physical description. Think about it - no description of what Jesus, or any of the Apostles looked like at all. Several women in the Old Testament are described as 'beautiful' and poor old Leah is described as plain-looking, in contrast to her sister Rachel, who 'had a lovely figure and was beautiful' in Genesis 29:17. We have descriptions of Elijah's and John the Baptist's clothing in 2 Kings 1:8 and Matthew 3:4. Esau is described as hairy and red-haired in Genesis 25:25. David is described as 'glowing with health and having a fine appearance and handsome features' (1 Samuel 16:12), and Goliath's height was six cubits and a span, which is over nine feet tall (Samuel 17:4). We are told that Samson and Absalom had long hair (Judges 16:17; 2 Samuel 14:26). In 2 Corinthians 10:10 St. Paul describes his own appearance as 'unimpressive.' And that's about it. I guess this allows us to draw our own images in our minds as we think and pray the Bible, as artists have done for us over the centuries. Not that physical appearance should matter, as the Bible itself tells us; '*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*' Even so

my Lockdown II 'Corona Quiff' is starting to get a little out of hand, so here's hoping the Brass Moustache in Poulton will be open again soon!

Y'all have a good day.

Sunday's Bereavement Mass was recorded and is available on the YouTube at

<https://youtu.be/vz7JvyVr6mQ> 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.