

Wednesday November 18th, Wednesday 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.

Another early morning message today, as a chappy is coming to set up the Church for the interweb, and hopefully we will soon be able to start streaming masses live. I'll let you know the progress!

Today's reading from the Book of Revelation 4:1-11 is a glimpse of heaven. The description beautiful and fantastical, and concludes with all creation is praising Jesus Christ. *'You are our Lord and our God, you are worthy of glory and honour and power, because you made all the universe and it was only by your will that everything was made and exists.'*

Luke 19:11-28 is the Parable of the Talents which we heard in Sunday's Gospel, though on Sunday we heard the version in St. Matthew's Gospel. We are all given some talents in life. The reward we get will depend on the effort we put into using them positively. But we can also see the talents, the roman coin, referring to our God-given faith, and how we share and use that.

*Lord, give me each day the wisdom to see which things are important,
and which things are not.*

Show me how best to use the time and talents you have given me.

*Help me to use all my opportunities wisely, that I may share,
through service to others,*

the faith and the good gifts I have received from you.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And today's memorial is that of the Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul. This feast celebrates the dedications of two of the four major basilicas of Rome. So let's start our thoughts of the Feast with 'For All The Saints.' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_UvXe-of-s

Saint Peter's Basilica was originally built in 323 by the emperor Constantine. The basilica was constructed over the tomb of Peter the Apostle, the first Pope. After standing for more than a thousand years, Pope Julius II ordered the building to be torn down due to structural concerns. The construction of the new church spanned over 200 years before its completion. It was dedicated on Nov. 18, 1626. It is considered the most famous church in Christendom.

Saint Paul's Basilica is located outside the original walls of Rome, hence its name 'St. Paul's Outside The Walls.' It was also originally built by the emperor Constantine though it was destroyed by fire in 1823. Donations from around the world made the reconstruction possible. Before the completion of Saint Peter's Basilica, St Paul's was the largest church in Rome. The Basilica was built over St. Paul's grave, near Tre Fontani 'Three Fountains' as it is said that when he was beheaded his head bounced three times and a fountain sprung up at each spot. Pope Pius IX consecrated the Basilica in 1854.

As you can imagine, with six years in Rome, I have very happy memories of both Churches, from singing in both of them - Easter Sundays in St. Peter's, and for the Beatification of the English Martyrs at Vespers in St. Paul's - to the many times we'd take family and pilgrims to see them, as well as receiving many papal blessings at St. Peter's, be it the general audiences, or on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. After my diaconate my family was honoured to celebrate mass at the actual tomb of St. Peter far, far down below St. Peter's, where the box containing his bones was found. There was also a wonderful convent near St. Paul's at Tre Fontani which had perpetual exposition, well sort of. The tabernacle was glass fronted, so the Blessed Sacrament was always exposed, though not out of the tabernacle. The nuns there were very modern, and would love us to go there with our guitars on a day's off afternoon and sing Taize chants and folk hymns in the chapel. Happy days. Obviously I have many photos of the two basilicas to choose from to attach. The one of the ceiling is St. Paul's, and each of the roundels along the top contains a portrait of the Popes, from St. Peter onwards. And as you've seen my ugly mug stuffing my face the last couple of days, I thought for a picture of St. Peter's here's my mate Phil, my Mother, Father, Uncle Joe, my mate Ed, and Fr. Rob Esdaile of Arundel and Brighton Diocese, and his mother, taken on Christmas Day thirty years ago, just after we'd received the Papal Blessing from the balcony of the basilica.

*Defend you Church, O Lord,
by the protection of the holy Apostles,
that, as she received from them
the beginnings of her knowledge fo things divine,
so through them she may receive,
even to the end of the world,
an increase in heavenly grace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Have a happy 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.