

Tuesday January 5th, Second Tuesday in Christmastide.

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.

Well we seemed to be plunged back into lockdown, so let us do everything we can to keep ourselves safe, and shield and help those most vulnerable at this time, praying for everyone who continues to work, especially those on the front line. Apparently, Churches are still open for communal prayer, so masses will continue, and other services such as funerals with the previous restrictions. Please pray for our children who after one day at school are back to home and online learning.

Anyhoo, John continues his treatise on love. In 1 John 3:11-12 we are reminded that Jesus gave up his life for us; we too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers. Our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active.

As Andrew brought Simon to the Lord, as we read yesterday, so in John 1:43-51 Philip is called to be a disciple of Jesus and he in turn brings Nathaniel to the Lord. There is an amusing exchange as Nathaniel is reluctant to see Jesus as he believes that nothing good can come from Nazareth. Jesus tells him, 'I tell you most solemnly, you will see heaven laid open and, above the Son of Man, the angels of God ascending and descending.' Here's a little prayer to our Guardian Angels:

*My good Angel,
Thou comest from heaven;
God has sent thee to take care of me.
Oh, shelter me under thy wings.
Lighten my path, direct my steps.
Do not leave me, stay quite near me and defend me against the spirit of evil.
But above all come to my help in the last struggle of my life.
Deliver my soul so that with thee it may praise, love
and contemplate the goodness of God forever and ever.
Amen.*

And following that prayer let our carol today be 'Angels We Have Heard On High.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHWqj6gKS9g>

And like yesterday we go to America for today's Saint, Saint John Neumann (not to be confused with our own Saint John Henry Newman). John was born in Bohemia in 1811. After he finished his studies

in Prague he went to the New World as a missionary. He was ordained in New York and later joined the Redemptorists. In 1852 he became Bishop of Philadelphia where he promoted the system of parochial schools. He encouraged large numbers of teaching brothers and sisters to help in this work. Among his written works were two catechisms which were widely used in the US for the rest of the century. He died in 1860 and was canonised in 1977.

St. John Neumann, you had great devotion to our Eucharistic Lord.

Pray that we may know and love the Eucharist as you did.

Give strength and courage to the Vicar of Christ.

Protect our bishops, priests, and religious.

May all people be zealous for the kingdom of God.

Enlighten the minds of people who seek truth.

Lead them to the path of justice.

How good it is to know that you will never forget our families, relatives, and friends.

Protect our loved ones away from home.

May your prayers comfort the souls of our departed brethren.

St. John Neumann, pray that we may live and die in the state of grace.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I'm not sure where John Neumann was ordained, but I attach a couple of pictures of St. Patrick's Cathedral which I took in New York a few years ago. St. Patrick's Cathedral is the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of New York and the seat of the Archbishop. Located on Fifth Avenue, across from Rockefeller Center, the sanctuary is the largest Gothic Catholic cathedral in the US, and takes up one whole block of Manhattan. This international landmark, dedicated in 1879, welcomes more than five million visitors each year. It was inspired in the mid 1800's by the Archbishop of New York, John Hughes, who proposed *'for the glory of Almighty God, for the honour of the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin, for the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, for the dignity of our ancient and glorious Catholic name, to erect a Cathedral in the City of New York that may be worthy of our increasing numbers, intelligence, and wealth as a religious community, and at all events, worthy as a public architectural monument, of the present and prospective crowns of this metropolis of the American continent.'* With its 330-foot spires, it is one of the City's most spectacular architectural sights. Inside, it boasts a seating capacity of 2,400, numerous altars and stained glass windows, and a giant organ with 7,855 pipes. It's an incredible place, well worth a visit if we are ever allowed to travel again. You can find out more about this amazing Church at <https://saintpatrickscathedral.org/>

If you know of anyone who needs help at this time, give me a shout. Stay safe and well.

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.