

Saturday January 9th 2021, Saturday after Epiphany.

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 that was quite a blizzard yesterday afternoon – and as you can see from the attached pic I got caught in it on the prom!

St. John continues his treatise about love. God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him. in 1 John 4:11-18 St. John also speaks about one of the characteristics of love: in love there can be no fear; fear is driven out by perfect love. *'Love will come to its perfection in us when we can face the day of judgement without fear.'*

In the aftermath of the miracle of the loaves and fishes we see that the faith of the apostles had not yet developed fully. Mark 6:45-52 recounts the miracle of Jesus walking on water and calming the storm. The Apostles are fearful and at first don't even recognise Jesus. *'They were utterly dumbfounded, because they had not seen what the miracles of the loaves meant; their minds were closed.'* Let's pray that the Lord will increase our faith;

Jesus, when You walked on earth,

You demonstrated Your power over nature.

*You are the One who walked on water and rebuked the fierce tempest,
and at Your command, the wind stopped and a great calm prevailed.*

You are the same yesterday, today and forever.

We ask you to open our hearts and minds to your presence.

Deepen our faith and trust in you.

Thank You for Your protection and care. Amen.

Of course the calming of the storm is often used as a metaphor for the help of Christ in any difficulty. I think we all need a little of Christ's peace right now from the winds and waves of covid19:

Lord, we give thanks to You, for You are good;

Your faithful love endures forever.

When the winds and the waves rise, and we cringe in terror,

we cry out to You in our distress,

knowing You can calm the storm to a whisper and still the waves.

Please draw near, and be our safety.

*We praise You for Your great love and the wonderful things You have done for us.
Amen.*

I noticed during the Requiems this week the prayer for Burial at Sea. It makes a lovely reference to the calming of the storm:

*Lord God,
by the power of your Word,
you stilled the chaos of the primeval seas,
you made the raging water of the Flood subside,
and calmed the storm on the sea of galilee.
As we commit the body of our deceased brother/sister to the deep,
grant him/her peace and tranquillity
until the day when he/she and all who believe in you
will be raised to the glory of new life
promised in the waters of baptism Christ our Lord. Amen.*

For our carol today, how about ‘O Come Ye Faithful’, but in Latin, ‘Adeste Fidelis’:

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

And today we remember St. Adrian (sometimes called Hadrian) of Canterbury. An African by birth, he became Abbot of Nerida, a Benedictine monastery near Naples, when he was very young. Pope Vitalian intended to appoint him Archbishop of Canterbury to succeed St. Deusdedit, who had died in 664, but Adrian considered himself unworthy and begged the Pope to appoint Theodore, a Greek monk, in his place. The Pope agreed, on condition that Adrian should accompany Theodore to England and be his adviser in the administration of the Diocese of Canterbury. They left Rome in 668, immediately upon his arrival in England, Archbishop Theodore appointed him Abbot of St. Peter in Canterbury. Adrian accompanied Theodore on his apostolic visitations of England and assisted the Archbishop in the great work of unifying the customs and practices of the Anglo-Saxon Church with those of the Church of Rome. He established numerous other schools in various parts of England. After spending thirty-nine years in England Adrian died on the 9th of January in the year 710 and was buried at Canterbury.

*Grant us, O Lord,
that amid the uncertainties of this world
we may cling with all our heart to the things of heaven,
for through the Abbot blessed Adrian
you have given us a model of evangelical perfection.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,*

*who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

There has been a call for us from the Public Health Inspectorate of Lancashire to suspend communal worship, despite Tier 4 allowing us to meet, and the Bishop is looking into it. In the meantime please let there be no socialising in or around the Church, so that we can prove that we are following all safety restrictions and keeping our Churches safe.

Enjoy the weekend – I think we are safe from Blizzards today!

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.