

Tuesday January 12<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday of Week 1 in Ordinary Time Year 1.

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.

And what a beautiful morning to wake up to.

God created man a little less than himself. In Hebrews 2:5-12 we are reminded because of sin we do not reach our full potential - we are subject to the world in many ways, even though the world should be subject to us. Jesus Christ came into this situation so that by his life, death and glory he might make us what we were meant to be. *'I shall announce your name to my brothers; praise you in full assembly.'*

Following his baptism and the choosing of the first apostles it wasn't long after the beginning of his public ministry that Jesus began to make an impression. This was due to his style of teaching - he taught with authority, and he also had authority over the demons. *'And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.'* It is a salutary reminder to us that our lifestyles must always reflect the faith that we profess and teach, in deed teaching by our actions is perhaps the best way to pass on the message of Christ and his Church.

*Almighty God,*

*please give me the confidence to preach the gospel at all times.*

*Help me to be firm and determined to preach your good news under whatever condition.*

*May my words and actions reflect your teaching, making it authoritative.*

*Anoint me and make me a useful instrument to harvesting plentiful souls into your kingdom.*

*For in the name of Jesus Christ I pray.*

*Amen.*

Let's sing 'Firmly I Believe and Truly God Is Three and God Is One'. The words of the hymn come from Cardinal Newman's poem 'The Dream of Gerontius', the words of the creed which Gerontius recites before he dies in grace. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSO5a0\\_Ycwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSO5a0_Ycwo)

And today we think of St. Aelred of Rievaulx. Aelred was born in 1109, the son of Eilaf, a Saxon priest. Aelred was educated at Roxburgh, the ancient Scottish capital, where he was known for his intellectual talents. It's said that as a child, Aelred prophesied the death of a bad archbishop of York, although some doubt this since Thomas, the archbishop at that time, was not bad. When Aelred

finished his schooling, he became the steward to King David of Scotland. He left his job in 1133 to join the Cistercian community at Rievaulx. He was the first abbot of Rievaulx's daughterhouse in Revesby, Lincolnshire, but he returned to Rievaulx in 1147 to be abbot. During the last ten years of his life, his health deteriorated, and he suffered from gout and a bad cough. St. Aelred wrote his most famous work, *The Mirror of Charity*, at the request of Bernard of Clairvaux. Aelred also penned lives of St. Ninian and of Edward the Confessor, in addition to a rule for recluses and a genealogy of the kings of England. He died in 1167. In his most celebrated work, *On Spiritual Friendship*, Saint Aelred reflected: *'Friendship is that virtue by which spirits are bound by ties of love and sweetness and out of many are made one.'* As he reflects in this beautiful book, human friendships and love are a reflection of the divine and pure love we experience with God, the true Friend.

*God our Father,  
You gave the blessed abbot Aelred of Rievaulx  
the grace of being all things to all people.  
May we, after his example,  
so spend ourselves in the service of our brothers and sisters  
as to preserve the unity of the spirit  
in the bond of peace.  
We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Today's date, when written 12/1/21 is a palindrome – it reads the same back to front. The word palindrome is derived from the Greek 'palin,' or 'back' and 'dromos' or 'direction.' The actual Greek phrase alluded to the backward movement of the crab. Palindromes date back to about 70AD, when they were first found as a graffito buried in ash at Herculaneum. This first known palindrome was in Latin and read '*sator arepo tenet opera rotas*' which means '*The sower Arepo leads with his hand on the plough.*' Palindromes were also found in ancient Greek and in ancient Sanskrit, so obviously people have been having quite a lot of fun with them for quite a long time. Here are a few famous ones:

*A man, a plan, a canal – Panama  
Go hang a salami, I'm a lasagna hog  
Madam, I'm Adam  
Ed, I saw Harpo Marx ram Oprah W. aside  
Are we not pure? 'No, sir!' Panama's moody Noriega brags. 'It is garbage!' Irony dooms a  
man - a prisoner up to new era  
Won't lovers revolt now?*

And I guess some Churches have closed because their congregation said:

*We panic in a pew.*

And talk of the Panama Canal, here is a pic I took whilst going through it last January - an amazing experience!

Enjoy the day – backwards or forwards!

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.