

Wednesday January 20th, Wednesday in the Second Week 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.

Another day of rain ahead of us, so the advice to stay home seems doubly sensible!

The whole chapter of chapter seven of the Letter to the Hebrews refers to the vague figure of Melchizedek. He was a priest to whom Abraham gave obedience. There is no reference to his birth or death, so he is said to be forever. He was superior to the Levite priests, and in Hebrews 7:1-3,15-17. In a sense he foreshadowed the great high priest, Jesus Christ, who is forever.

Jesus again shows his power in Mark 3:1-6 when he cures a man with a withered hand. He asks the Pharisees *'Is it against the law on the sabbath day to do good, or to do evil, to save life or to kill?'* but they refuse to answer him. His actions enrage them, and even though we are only at chapter three of the Gospel of St. Mark we are told *'The Pharisees went out and at once began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him.'* Let us pray for steadfastness in our faith:

*Dear Jesus Christ,
please help me to remain steadfast in faith
so that I can be crowned in heaven.
Give me the grace to resist temptations,
and help me to live uprightly with you always.
Enable me to exercise genuine repentance
so that I can be fit for your kingdom.
Empower me through your Holy Spirit
to be diligent and keep your testimony until the end.
When the end comes, let me receive a warm welcome in heaven,
and let me partake in your holy banquet.
Amen.*

'At The Name of Jesus, Every Knee Shall Bow.' A jolly version of this hymn for a somewhat dampy day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI2rKRCWmOU>

We actually have a choice of Saints to celebrate today: Saint Fabian and Saint Sebastian. St. Fabian was elected to the role of Pope in the year 236, though he wasn't even a priest. He divided Rome in to seven distinct areas in order to help better serve the needs of the poor, and was finally martyred under

the Emperor Diocletian. St. Cyprian called him ‘an incomparable man.’ St. Sebastian was also Italian, born around the year 300 in Milan. According to tradition he was a guard in the Emperor Diocletian’s Imperial army. After becoming a Christian he too suffered martyrdom, and his tomb, on the Via Appia in Rome, soon became a place of pilgrimage. He is often shown in art being impaled with arrows, and is patron Saint of Doctors and the Police.

*Grant us, we pray, O Lord,
A spirit of fortitude,
So that, taught by the glorious example of Saints Fabian and Sebastian,
We may learn to obey you rather than men,
And make progress by communion in the faith
And by worthy service.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The tech fund is still open to help our children with their online learning, and many thanks to everyone who has already contributed. Please keep in your prayers, and remember to thank, our school staff who are teaching at school and providing online lessons. Don’t forget to pray for parents who have to home teach, care and work as well. And keep safe everyone!

*Thank You, Father, for technology
which is allowing students to continue their educations online,
for virtual classrooms and technological resources.
Thank You for every teacher and educator adjusting to their new normal.
Equip them with energy and inspiration alongside their students in this time of crisis.
Protect their health, Father, both physically and mentally.
May the staff of our schools be blessed with wisdom in this difficult time.
May the needs of students be seen, and given Your provision to meet those needs.
Bless our school secretaries, finding ways to serve and work in this unique situation.
Bless those who keep the school clean, giving us a safe environment to work.
Let us all stay inspired and reminded that impossible situations
can be the fuel for big dreams to be realized.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

I attach a pic wearing a tee shirt a friend in America sent a couple of Christmases ago. I guess if you have to wear a tee shirt saying it, you’re probably not. You decide!

Hope you have the best day you can.

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.