

Friday January 22nd, Friday 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.

Well after all the rain it looks glorious today, if a little chilly. Definitely up for a healthy walk along the prom this afternoon - concluding with one of Mr. Manfredi's hot chocolates!

Today Hebrews 8:6-13 speaks of the New Covenant, and it's superiority over the previous ones discussed in the Old Testament. If the first covenant had worked there would be no need for the second. *'I will be their God and they shall be my people. I will forgive their iniquities and never call their sins to mind.'*

And in today's Gospel, Mark 3:13-19, Jesus appoints the Twelve Apostles, *'they were to be his companions and to be sent out to preach, with power to cast out devils,'* the last one being named as *'Judas Iscariot, the man who was to betray him,'* later to be replaced by Matthias. Let us pray that we can be faithful companions of Jesus, preaching our and living out his mission in the world today.

*Almighty God,
who built your Church upon the foundation
of the apostles and prophets,
with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone:
in your love you invite us to be your friends:
in your joy you choose us to go out and bear fruit:
in your power you send us to be your faithful witnesses.
Join us together in unity of spirit by their doctrine,
that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

'Alleluia, sing to Jesus' seems a good choice for a hymn today, I think:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56a4w7XxvfY>

And whilst travel corridors are closed we spiritually go over to Spain for our Saint of the Day: Saint Vincent. St. Vincent, the protomartyr of Spain, was a deacon of the 3rd century who was born in

Saragossa in North East Spain. Together with his Bishop, Valerius of Saragossa, he was apprehended during a persecution of Dacian the governor of Spain. Valerius was banished but Vincent was subjected to fierce tortures before ultimately dying from his wounds. According to accounts of his martyrdom, his flesh was pierced with iron hooks, he was bound upon a red-hot gridiron and roasted, and he was cast into a prison and laid on a floor strewn with broken pottery. Pretty gruesome. But through it all his constancy remained unmoved, actually leading to the conversion of the head jailer, and he survived until his friends were allowed to see him and prepare a bed for him upon which he died. The saint's fame spread rapidly throughout Gaul and Africa - we have several sermons of St. Augustine given on his feast day. Saint Vincent is the patron of vintners, vinegar-makers, brickmakers, and sailors.

*Almighty God,
whose deacon Vincent, upheld by you,
was not Terrified by threats nor overcome by torments:
Strengthen us to endure all adversity with invincible and steadfast faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Up on Arundal Avenue the smell of boiling Seville oranges is pervading the air, as Eileen makes her third round of Marmalade – delicious. *One day mother hen laid an orange. When they saw it all the other chickens said, 'Look what marmalade.' I'll get my coat...*

Enjoy the lovely day!

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.