

Tuesday January 26th, Tuesday in Week Three of 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 I hope everyone kept safe and well yesterday.

As we continue our third week of our month-long travail through the letter to the Hebrews we are reminded in Hebrews 10:1-10 that the old sacrifices were imperfect - they could only give a distant and spasmodic contact with God. Thus they were only a pale copy of what real worship ought to be - they could never bring humankind into a close relationship with God. Christ was fully obedient to the Father and so his sacrifice was perfect. *'This was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once for all by Jesus Christ.'*

In the short Gospel, Mark 3:31-35 Jesus reminds his listeners that anyone who does the will of God can become his brother, sister and mother. We should remember as we listen to Jesus' words that no one did the will of God the Father more perfectly than our Blessed Mother Mary. Let us pray St. Theresa's prayer to Our Lady for times of trouble. It seems very appropriate for these times.

Holy Virgin Mary, you are reigning in glory, with Jesus, your Son.

Remember us in our sadness.

Look kindly on all who are suffering or fighting against any difficulty.

Have pity on those who are separated from someone they love.

Have pity on the loneliness of our hearts.

Have pity on the weakness of our faith and love.

Have pity on those who are weeping, on those who are praying, on those who are fearful.

Holy Mother, please obtain for all of us hope and peace with justice.

Amen.

And today we celebrate the Memorial of two Bishops, Saints Timothy and Titus. St. Timothy, born in Galatia in Asia Minor, was baptized and later ordained to the priesthood by St. Paul. The young Galatian became Paul's missionary companion and his most beloved spiritual son. St. Paul showed his trust in this disciple by consecrating him Bishop of the great city of Ephesus. St. Timothy was stoned to death thirty years after St. Paul's martyrdom for having denounced the worship of the goddess Diana. St. Titus, a convert from paganism, was a fellow labourer of St. Paul on many apostolic missions. St. Paul later made him bishop of Crete, a difficult charge because of the character of the

inhabitants and the spread of erroneous doctrines on that island. St. Paul's writings tell us that St. Titus rejoiced to discover what was good in others and drew the hearts of men by his wide and affectionate sympathy.

*O God,
who adorned Saints Timothy and Titus with apostolic virtues,
grant through the intercession of them both,
that, living justly and devoutly in this present age,
we may merit to reach our heavenly homeland.
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.*

And over in Australia they are celebrating the evidently somewhat contentious Australia Day. I'll let my sister tell you about it. *'Today is a public holiday. Australia day commemorates the landing of the First Fleet and the establishment of the penal colony in what is now New South Wales. It has been a holiday for only 26 years but many people want a different date for the national day as to the Indigenous Australians this marks 'invasion day' and the beginning of the attempted wiping out of the oldest continuous culture in the world. There is a growing pressure to change and the day is now marked by rallies in support of indigenous people. Some alternative suggestions are: Mabo day 8th June to commemorate Eddie Mabo, who in 1992 overturned in court the doctrine of "Terra Nullius", meaning that Indigenous People were recognized as people with land rights, not fauna (this actually took that long), or Federation Day when Australia became an independent nation in 1900.'* Either way, it's evidently an excuse for a posh coffee for my sister and niece. And this is the beautiful Australia Day Prayer:

*O God, powerful and gentle, you love this southern land and all its peoples, old and new.
As the Cross shines in our heavens so may Christ bring light to our nation.
As the waves encircle our shores so may your mercy enfold us all.
O God, the wonders of our vast and rugged land reflect your beauty, ever ancient, ever new.
May your blessings flow upon us as a stream in the desert,
and may your spirit prompt us to use your gifts for the good of all.
May God who formed our southern land be for us a rock of strength.
May God who rules our southern seas keep us safe in every storm.
May God who made our southern skies turn our darkness into light. Amen.*

G'day y'all!

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.