

Wednesday January 27th, Wednesday 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.

An early message as the hall is in use from first thing for flow testing of the school and staff, including myself. Tomorrow a few of us will be having training in leading the testing so myself and our staff can remain as safe as possible.

In Hebrews 1:11-18 we continue the treatise on sacrifice. The Jewish priests had to offer sacrifice over and over again - every day. They could never fully take away sins. Jesus offered only one sacrifice - it was an act of perfect obedience and therefore the only perfect sacrifice. He now sits at the right hand of the Father. *'By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying.'*

Today's Gospel is the great parable of the seed falling on various times of soil, each of which reacts differently to the seed. Jesus goes on to privately explain to the disciples the meaning of the parable, concluding that the seed which fell on rich soil are *'those who hear the word and accept it and yield a harvest, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.'*

King of Heaven and Earth, we thank You

For the reminder that even the dirt beneath our feet shows the sign of Your resurrection,

Teach our hearts also to be fertile soil for Your Word,

And bless us with the abundance of Your love,

With fruit of the earth, seasonable weather,

and great love for each other.

Through Christ our Lord.

'Sweet Heart of Jesus, Fount of Love and Mercy' might be a lovely hymn to sing along to today:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNsTtBMm4YM>

And today is the memorial of St. Angela Merici. Angela was born around 1470 on a farm in Desenzano, Italy. She had three older brothers, an older sister, and a younger sister. The older children and Angela's parents had all died before Angela was an adult. She and her younger sister were cared for by an uncle, but he died when Angela was a young woman. People knew Angela really loved God. She was especially fascinated by St. Ursula, who was the daughter of a British Christian king in the 10th century, executed for not marrying a pagan prince. After her uncle died, Angela went to Brescia,

Italy, where a wealthy family helped her open a school for young women. She had been concerned that education was not an option for women who were not wealthy. At the school, Angela taught the girls about God. In November of 1535, she gathered a group of women to help take care of the city's poor. They called themselves Ursulines, because they believed St. Ursula would protect them. They divided Brescia into sections, and the Ursulines went out in groups to help take care of and teach young women. Since that time, almost 500 years ago, the Ursuline community can be found throughout the world teaching and caring for those who will hear the Good News. They were the first teaching order of women religious. Angela died in 1540. Her body lies buried in the Church of St. Afra at Brescia. She was beatified in 1768 by Pope Clement XIII and canonized in 1807 by Pope Pius VII. St. Angela is the Patron Saint of disabled and physically challenged people and illnesses.

*May the Virgin Saint Angela never fail to commend us
to your compassion, O Lord, we pray,
that, following the lessons of her charity and prudence,
we may hold fast to your teaching
and express it in what we do.
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.*

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day. Let us pray the official Jewish prayer for this memorial:

*Loving God, we come to you with heavy hearts, remembering the six million Jewish souls
murdered during the Holocaust.*

*In the horrors of that history, when so many groups were targeted because of their identity,
and in genocides which followed, we recognise destructive prejudices that drive people apart.*

*Forgive us when we give space to fear, negativity and hatred of others, simply because they
are different from us.*

*In the light of God, we see everyone as equally precious manifestations of the Divine, and can
know the courage to face the darkness.*

*Through our prayers and actions, help us to stand together with those who are suffering, so
that light may banish all darkness, love will prevail over hate and good will triumph over evil.*

Amen

Enjoy the day, and be glad for it. With a picture of a very grumpy looking cat.

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.