

Thursday January 28<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 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.

Well, we were due to have training from the Army about flow testing today, but unfortunately there has been a mix up with the type of testing kits, so we'll sort that out next week. Hey ho!

In Hebrews 10:19-25 we move from theology to practical exhortation. Jesus is the living way to the presence of God. We have been purified and freed from our sins. We are full of hope. Let us approach the presence of God and hold fast to our creed and *'encourage one another; the more as you see the Day drawing near.'*

Whatever talents we are given in life, we are expected to use them to the best of our ability. We should be the beacons of virtue in the community. And Mark 4:21-25 gives us the Little Parable of the Lamp put on the lamp stand to shine for all. *'If anyone has ears to hear let him listen to this.'*

*Light of the World, with you there is no darkness.*

*Yet in our broken world, we see so much darkness around us.*

*Pain, sickness, and disease are in our community and in many of our homes.*

*Bring your light and restoring presence to the dark places in our lives.*

*Bring your hope to hearts that feel defeated.*

*Bring your love and compassion to those in pain.*

*Give us faith to say with the psalmist:*

*'Lord, you light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness.'*

*May your light of hope shine in the darkness for families today.*

*Show us glimpses of your presence with us and the comfort you bring.*

*You are trustworthy, good, and true,*

*and we thank you for caring for us so deeply and beautifully.*

*Open our eyes to see you at work today.*

*Give us your light.*

*Amen.*

And after that we have just got to sing 'Lord, the light of your love is shining... Shine, Jesus, Shine.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OIwSQmyCg4>

And today is the Feast Day of the so-called ‘Angelic Doctor’ St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the great teachers of the medieval Catholic Church, and honoured with the title Doctor of the Church. Born in 1224 at five he was given to the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino in his parents’ hopes that he would choose that way of life and eventually became abbot. In 1239, he was sent to Naples to complete his studies. It was here that he was first attracted to the philosophy of Aristotle. By 1243, Thomas abandoned his family’s plans for him and joined the Dominicans, much to his mother’s dismay. On her order, Thomas was captured by his brother and kept at home for over a year! Once free, he went to Paris and then to Cologne, where he finished his studies with Albert the Great. His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church is his writings. The Summa Theologiae, his last and, unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology. He stopped work on it after celebrating Mass on December 6, 1273. When asked why he stopped writing, he replied, *‘I cannot go on.... All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me.’* He died March 7, 1274. As Patron Saint of Students, this is Aquinas’ very own Student’s Prayer. Perhaps we can remember all those studying at home and online at this time:

*Come, Holy Spirit, Divine Creator, true source of light and fountain of wisdom!  
Pour forth your brilliance upon my dense intellect,  
dissipate the darkness which covers me, that of sin and of ignorance.  
Grant me a penetrating mind to understand, a retentive memory,  
method and ease in learning, the lucidity to comprehend,  
and abundant grace in expressing myself.  
Guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to successful completion.  
This I ask through Jesus Christ, true God and true man,  
living and reigning with You and the Father, forever and ever.  
Amen.*

In other news Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, gives us all an abject lesson in ensuring we wash our paws thoroughly for twenty seconds, regularly throughout the day, as you see in the attached picture.

Have a lovely day, as best 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.