

Saturday January 30<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 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 here we are at the weekend, still continuing our Public Masses, with the weekend ones live streamed and available on the YouTube for the week.

*'Only faith guarantees the blessings we hope for. It was for their faith that our ancestors were commended,'* Hebrews 11:1-2.8-19 tells us. We are asked to look back at some great examples of faith in the Old testament Look at the faith of Abraham - a faith ready for a tremendous adventure. Look at the faith of his barren wife, Sarah. Look at Abraham's faith when he was asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

And in our Gospel Mark 4:35-41 Jesus calms the waters - the disciples were trying to get away for some quiet reflection and prayer, but following on from the reading from Hebrews there is again an emphasis that having faith is essential. With faith Jesus can calm our fears. *'The Apostles were filled with awe and said to one another, "Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him."*' And once again we are invited to use the storm as a metaphor for our present situation.

*Lord, we give thanks to You, for You are good;*

*Your faithful love endures forever.*

*When the winds and the waves rise, and we cringe in terror,*

*we cry out to You in our distress,*

*knowing You can calm the storm to a whisper and still the waves.*

*Please draw near, and be our safety.*

*We praise You for Your great love*

*and the wonderful things You have done for us. Amen.*

Although there is no Saint's day today, it is a tradition to devote Saturday to our Blessed Mother Mary. To dedicate Saturday in honour of Mary is an ancient custom, based on a legendary account that Jesus appeared to Mary on the Saturday, the day after His death. He did so to reward her for her steadfast faith in His divinity, which did not waver under the Cross. The great theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Ss. Bernard, Thomas, and Bonaventure explained the dedication of Saturdays to Mary by pointing to the time of Christ's rest in the grave. Everyone else had abandoned Christ; only Mary continued to believe. This was her day! A Dominican missal of the fifteenth

century listed additional reasons in a hymn: Saturday is the day when creation was completed. Therefore it is also celebrated as the day of the fulfilment of the plan of salvation, which found its realization through Mary. Sunday is the Lord's Day, so it seemed appropriate to name the day preceding as Mary's day. The Liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council continued the tradition of Saturday being devoted to Our lady, and in the present Missal there are a whole host of different masses commemorating Our Lady, as well as her Feasts throughout the year.

*Grant Lord, that we, your servants,  
may rejoice in unfailing health of mind and body,  
And, through the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin,  
May we be set free from present sorrow,  
And come to enjoy eternal happiness,  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Your Son, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

And let's sing a hymn to our Mother Mary: 'O Mother Blest, Whom God Bestows On Sinners and On Just.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nb7PchC-p04>

In a 'nothing better to do in lockdown' moment, I started preparing for Chinese New Year with a little napkin origami. I Hope you have a great weekend, continuing to stay as safe and well as possible.

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.