

Monday February 1<sup>st</sup>, Monday in the Fourth 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.

White Rabbits! And welcome to February!

We are in the fourth and last week of the sermon to the Hebrews. The author continues on the theme of the need for faith, and refers to other great people of the Old Testament - Gideon, Samson, Barak, David and Samuel. In Hebrews 11:32-40 he reminds us that each one faced incredible odds in fighting for God and came out victorious. They were made strong out of weakness - just like the many women and children who suffered persecution because of their faith.

In Mark 5:1-20 we are presented with the strange story of the demons who are cast out by Jesus and enter a herd of pigs, who promptly throw themselves off a cliff. and the pigs - forbidden meat to the Jews. The healing power of Jesus is without limit, and how the world needs that healing power in these strange times! This lovely prayer references the help God gave to King David in his times of trial.

*Lord, like King David,*

*We need your encouragement in a time of trial and anguish.*

*Thank you that you are always on the heavenly throne, always my God, ready to save.*

*Thank you for being the same powerful God to us that you were to David.*

*Thank you for always being near and always rescuing us from our fears and hurts.*

*Lord, help us remember that daybreak might be just ahead, that this trial will not last forever.*

*Fill us with hope that daybreak is coming and that your love will always prevail!*

*Through Christ Our Lord. Amen!*

'Lord For Tomorrow And It's Needs' might be an appropriate hymn for today. Appropriately enough the tune it is sung to is called 'PROVIDENCE.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBaDH1jHWI4>

And today we celebrate the secondary Patron of Ireland, St. Brigid. It is generally believed that Brigid was born in Faughart, Co. Louth in Ireland. She spent much of her early years doing farm work - milking and making butter. She was an attractive girl and her father wanted to make a good match for her in marriage. She wished to consecrate her life to God, and it was with difficulty that she persuaded her father to let her go. She first went to the monastery of St Mel in Ardagh. Her reputation for genuine holiness grew and many more young women joined her. She founded a second monastery in

Kildare. She often travelled outside the monastery for evangelisation and charitable purposes. She was mainly concerned with hospitality, alms-giving, and care of the sick. She died in 524. She became known as Mary of the Gael, and is venerated in parts of Europe.

*Brigid,*

*You were a woman of peace.*

*You brought harmony where there was conflict.*

*You brought light to the darkness. You brought hope to the downcast.*

*May the mantle of your peace cover those who are troubled and anxious,  
and may peace be firmly rooted in our hearts and in our world.*

*Inspire us to act justly and to reverence all God has made.*

*Brigid you were a voice for the wounded and the weary.*

*Strengthen what is weak within us. Calm us into a quietness that heals and listens.*

*May we grow each day into greater wholeness in mind, body and spirit.*

*Amen.*

As we are in Ireland for today's Feast, here's a photo I took many years ago there, 1999 actually, when on a holiday. The picture is the remains of a village called 'Devil's Elbow' near Glendalough. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the pit closed, and the whole of the village decamped en masse to West Cumbria – including my great-Grandfather.

Have a great start to the month, the week, and the 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.