

Wednesday February 3rd, Wednesday 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.

Bit of a damp start to the morning, but let's not allow our spirits to be dampened! Lots to do today, so let's crack on!

In Hebrews 12:4-7,11-15 the author gives another reason why people should cheerfully bear affliction when it comes - the great saints of the past have borne it and it is also little compared to what Christ suffered. Bear the hardship - it is sent by God as a discipline which gives value to life.

In Mark 6:1-6 We go from great faith to great doubt; Jesus was not accepted in his own community. The people found it hard to have faith in him because they knew his background and therefore have difficulty in recognising him as the Messiah. And as they didn't have faith, no miracles could be worked in Jesus' own home town. 'And Jesus said to them, "*A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house,*" and he could work no miracle there.' Let us be grateful for the faith to recognise Jesus.

Father, thank You for Your Word which is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path and thank You Father, for the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word made flesh, Who has life in Himself and is the light of the world in Whom is no darkness at all.

Lord, more than anything else, I desire to bathe in that light of the Lord Jesus so that the light of His love and grace may shine through me to others, especially at those times when the circumstances of life seem to be particularly gloomy and dark.

Father, You have called us to be lights in the world, reflecting the glory and light of Christ and I pray that I may become His reflection, so that men may see my good works and glorify my Father in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

So let us 'Sing It in The Valleys,' with staff and students of St. Peter's school (where it is I couldn't tell you) performing a kind of zoom version of the hymn, which is rather jolly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hmk553YEggc>

And today is the memorial of St. Blaise. Very little is known about St Blaise. It seems that he was born of a rich and noble family, received a Christian education and was made a bishop when quite young. During persecutions he spent much of his time in a cave. Many people came to him for cures, and there is one story of how he cured a boy who had a fishbone stuck in his throat, hence St. Blaise is

Patron Saint of Throats, and diseases of the throat. Hence the practice of the blessing of throats on this day, with the prayer *'Through the intercession of St. Blaise may the Lord protect you from diseases of the throat and all other evils besides.'*

*O Glorious Saint Blaise,
who by thy martyrdom
has left to the Church a precious witness to the faith,
obtain for us the grace to
preserve within ourselves this divine gift,
and to defend, without human respect,
both by word and example,
the truth of that same faith,
which is so wickedly attacked
and slandered in these our times.
You who miraculously cured
a little child when he was at the point of death
by reason of an affliction of the throat,
grant us your powerful protection in like misfortunes,
and, above all, obtain for us
the grace of repentance,
together with a faithful observance of our Church,
and avoidance from offending Almighty God. Amen.*

A man went to the doctors and said, 'I've a spoon and a knife and a fork stuck in my throat. 'It's not serious,' the doctor said, 'you just need to have utensils out.' I'll get my coat...

Just one more for the children: Why did 'Frozen's' Elsa never go to the doctor with a runny nose and sore throat? Because a cold never bothered her anyway. And now I'll leave.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Brenda Marlene Helm whose funeral I will be celebrating this afternoon at Carleton Crematorium. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Have a great day. Ooh, and check out the beautiful picture of the starlings over North Pier which Eileen took on her exercise walk on Monday afternoon. Incredible.

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.