

Wednesday February 10th, Wednesday in the Fifth 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.

Mid-week greetings, and more flow testing in the hall this morning, the second test of the week for myself and the first batch of school staff. I think we've got the hang of it now: write your name on the plate, open the packet, write the bar code number on your plate and booklet (for informing the NHS), open the liquid and pour it into the vial, open the swab, four dabs on each tonsil, ten swirls up your nose, swab into the liquid, two drops onto the pad, and wait to see the line appear around the C for negative. It all helps in keeping our school community as safe as possible! And me!

We move on to the story of the creation of man. Man was made in the image of God - he is a special part of the great creation. In Genesis 2:4-9.15-17 God breathed into his form and gave him life. He was given special gifts and did not know evil.

Jesus continues his discourse on inner purity, explaining in Mark 7:14-23 that nothing that goes into a man from outside can make him unclean. *'For it is from within, from men's hearts, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, slander, pride and folly.'* Let us pray for spiritual purity:

Lord of Light,

I ask that you clear my mind of impure thoughts

and help me think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.

Keep my mind set on excellent and praiseworthy things,

and help me avert my eyes and mind from things that harm me and my trust in You.

I want my thoughts to glorify You, but I need Your help in order to succeed in doing so.

Be my assistance, Father,

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I think an appropriate, and lovely, hymn for today would be 'Blest Are The Pure in Heart, For They Shall See Our God.', and this is a beautiful version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpnU2auc3Rk>

And today we remember St. Scholastica, the sister of St. Benedict. She consecrated her life to God from her earliest youth. After her brother went to Monte Cassino, where he established his famous monastery, she took up her abode in the neighbourhood at Plombariola, where she founded and

governed a monastery of nuns, about five miles from that of St. Benedict. She visited her brother once a year, and as she was not allowed to enter his monastery, he went in company with some of his brethren to meet her at a house some distance away. These visits were spent in conferring together on spiritual matters. On one occasion they had passed the time as usual in prayer and pious conversation and in the evening they sat down to take their reflection. St. Scholastica begged her brother to remain until the next day. St. Benedict refused to spend the night outside his monastery, but Scholastica prayed to God that he would stay, and a furious thunderstorm burst so that neither St. Benedict nor any of his companions could return home. They spent the night in spiritual conferences. The next morning they parted to meet no more on earth. Three days later St. Scholastica died, and her holy brother beheld her soul in a vision as it ascended into heaven. He sent his brethren to bring her body to his monastery and laid it in the tomb he had prepared for himself. She died about the year 543, and St. Benedict followed her soon after. This prayer in her honour fits neatly in with today's theme of purification:

*O God,
to show us where innocence leads,
you made the soul of your virgin Saint Scholastica soar to heaven like a dove in flight.
Grant through her merits and her prayers
that we may so live in innocence as to attain to joys everlasting.
This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever. Amen.*

I wrote on Sunday about the various names of hymn tunes, and my mate Chris, the MC at Sacred Heart in Thornton messaged me to say, '*Another tune is CRIMMOND which is the usual tune we sing to 'The Lord's My Shepherd'. It's famously referred to by Ena Sharples in Florrie Lindley's shop in the very first episode of 'Coronation Street.' There's piece of Corrie trivia which will never come up in a pub quiz.*' Although if it does, you now know the answer!

And congratulations to my nephew Patrick who has just received the Chris Nolan Award at the Academic Assembly of Australia for being in the top 5% of the country in his final year in High School! Well done you!

And don't the daffs look wonderful on the High Altar in Church! Spring is in the air! Have a great day! See you on the prom this afternoon!

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.