

Monday March 1st, 2021, The Feast of St. David

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.

Slightly later with The message today, as this beautiful first day of March began with Mass, then my bi-weekly covid test (negative) followed by our admissions meeting in school. So hey ho!

Our first reading today brings us to the Prophet Daniel. Daniel 9:4-10 reminds us that we have all sinned in many ways - we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly, we have betrayed God's Commandments. As a result we are full of shame, but *'to the lord our God mercy and pardon belong.'*

And in Luke 6:36-38 *'Jesus said to his disciples, "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate."'* Be compassionate, do not judge, give in good measure. Once again Jesus shows us the great potentiality he sees in each one of his to be like his Father in Heaven in whose image and likeness we were originally made. What an honour! Let's not disappoint him!

Lord, please open my eyes.

Please let me see those around me that are in need of my compassion.

Compel me to listen to them, to hear their needs.

*Give me the heart to be interested in their troubles
and provide for me the means to help them.*

*I want to be like you that had so much compassion for the world
that you sacrificed your Son on a cross for us.*

*I want to have that kind of heart for the world
that I will do all I can to be a voice for the oppressed,
a giver to the poor, and encouragement for the disenfranchised.*

May I be as compassionate as my Father is compassionate.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And iechyd da (yaki dar) today is the Feast of St. David, the Patron saint of Wales. According to tradition, St. David was the son of King Sant of South Wales and St. Non. He was ordained a priest and later studied under St. Paulinus. Later, he was involved in missionary work and founded a number of monasteries. The monastery he founded at Menevia in Southwestern Wales was noted for extreme asceticism. David and his monks were vegetarians, and drank neither wine nor beer, only water, for which he was given the nickname 'David the Drinkwater', while putting in a full day of heavy manual

labour, refusing the use of oxen, and intense study. Around the year 550, David attended a synod at Brevi in Cardiganshire. His contributions at the synod are said to have been the major cause for his election as primate of the Cambrian Church. He was reportedly consecrated archbishop by the patriarch of Jerusalem while on a visit to the Holy Land. He also is said to have invoked a council that ended the last vestiges of Pelagianism, which held that the original sin did not taint human nature and that humans have the free will to achieve human perfection without divine grace (basically, that you can achieve salvation yourself). David died at his monastery in Menevia around the year 589, and his cult was approved in 1120 by Pope Callistus II. St. David was endowed with substantial qualities of spiritual leadership and many monasteries flourished as a result of his leadership and good example. Saint David is also thought to be associated with ‘corpse candles’, lights that would warn of the imminent death of a member of the community. The story goes that David prayed for his people to have some warning of their death, so that they could prepare themselves. In a vision, David's wish was granted and told that from then on, people who lived in the land of Dewi Sant (Saint David) ‘would be forewarned by the dim light of mysterious tapers when and where the death might be expected’. The colour and size of the tapers indicated whether the person to die would be a woman, man, or child. Eek! As well as Patron Saint of Wales, due to his strict diet, David is also Patron Saint of Vegetarians and Vegans. His last words were said to be ‘Be steadfast, and do the little things’ gently showing us that sanctity is not always found in huge acts of bravery or thunderous preaching, but in small acts of kindness to all God’s creatures.

Almighty God, on this special day for the people of Wales,

we remember Saint David, your servant.

We give thanks for his passion for the Gospel

which helped to spread Christianity;

We give thanks for his purity and simplicity of life

which enabled his pursuit of Christian perfection;

We give thanks for his gentleness, but clear spiritual leadership.

Grant that we may learn from him

and respond to the words that are thought to be his last:

‘Be steadfast, and do the little things’;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

So for our hymn today we just have to sing that great hymn ‘Guide Me O Thy Great Redeemer’ in English <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3NmfVVGblw> or in Welsh <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo7IgNoaOuE>

In other news, Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, loves nothing more than hiding away in a cupboard, as you can see. Bless him.

Have a great day. And maybe some leek soup for St. David.

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.