

Friday March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, The Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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.

Today we break out of our purple Lenten weeds, to wear white for the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Husband of the blessed Virgin Mary. Very little is known about Joseph, beyond what we find in scripture, and it's worth noting that not a single word of Joseph is recorded in the Scriptures He was of royal descent, as we know from the genealogy in Matthew and Mark. Joseph was described as a just or godly man. He was betrothed to Mary when he discovered she was pregnant, but his fears were set at rest by the angelic vision. As well as being the foster-father of Jesus, he is seen as his protector and early educator.

The Church provides us with three lovely readings for today. II Samuel 7:4-5.12-14.16 speaks of how David was the greatest king of the chosen people. The prophet assures him that his dynasty will last forever. *'It is he who shall build a house for my name and I will make his royal throne secure for ever.'* Joseph was descended from David and was to be the protector of the Messiah. Romans 4:13.16-18.22 reminds us that even though Abraham was an old man with a wife who was barren he still believed in the promise that he would be the father of many nations. *'This is the faith that was considered as justifying him.'* And in our Gospel, Matthew 1:16.18-21.24 we have the dream of Joseph that he should marry Mary. He is a man of great faith and undertakes the responsibility of looking after the child conceived by the Holy Spirit. He is to name the child Jesus. *'And when Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do.'*

*Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
That by St. Joseph's intercession  
Your Church may constantly watch over  
The unfolding of the mysteries of human salvation,  
Whose beginnings you entrusted to his fatherly care.  
Just as Joseph served you with love  
Your only Begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary,  
So we may be worthy to minister to you, each in our calling.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

St. Joseph is Patron saint of Departing Souls, as he is believed to have had a perfect death, in the presence of Jesus and Mary. This is the prayer for a happy death:

*O Blessed Joseph*

*you gave your last breath in the loving embrace of Jesus and Mary.*

*When the seal of death shall close my life, come with Jesus and Mary to aid me.*

*Obtain for me this solace for that hour - to die with their holy arms around me.*

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I commend my soul, living and dying, into your sacred arms. Amen.*

St. Joseph is also Patron of Buying and Selling Houses, along with St. Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph provided Jesus with a roof over his head while he was alive, and Joseph of Arimathea provided Jesus with a roof over his head after he had died. This is a prayer that some of you may find useful.

*Glorious and good St. Joseph,*

*You experienced many tribulations in finding a home for Mary and Jesus.*

*Remember how much you worried about them, of your undertakings and closed doors that you encountered when you accompanied the Infant Jesus on the way to being censured and then your exile and finally the return to your country.*

*During times of hardship, you made sure that their material comfort always reflected your love and concern, your faithful presence and protection towards Mary and Jesus.*

*Watch over my actions in finding a home, that they proceed smoothly and in clarity*

*May this new home be welcoming, peaceful, and have good neighbours.*

*May all those that come to my home feel welcomed by your presence.*

*Fill this home with the love of Jesus and Mary. Amen.*

‘Fill Me House Unto The Fullest’ might make an appropriate hymn today:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krntxv811Dk>

And a prayer for the homeless might be appropriate after that, too.

*Compassionate Father,*

*I ask that You provide shelter for all the homeless in our world.*

*Guide them to safe shelters so they can be protected from the weather,*

*from people with bad intentions, and from all other complications of living outdoors.*

*Lord, please bless them and meet their needs.*

*Through the intercession of St. Joseph, who opened his doors to your Son,*

*Give them this comfort, Father,*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Four prayers today! Heavens!

News from Australia that my talented nephew Pat has gained a place in the Ballarat Schools Symphony Orchestra on the trombone. Here he is in the centre of the picture – which is actually a screen shot from a video, and the jazz trombone playing sounds amazing! Well done!

Back to my second Safeguarding Zoom meeting.

Stay safe and well yourselves.

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.