

Wednesday March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Wednesday in Holy Week, 'Spy Wednesday'

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.

Has the predicted heat wave arrived? Maybe so as it's a beautiful morning. And the morning so far has been spent with Bernard filming the children's Passion Play, 'Why Holy Week and Easter?' The children have been great, and the teachers have worked really hard to put it together, and it will be on the school's website tomorrow. Huge thanks to Bernard for filming and editing the play.

So today is the day we call 'Spy Wednesday' as *'One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.'* (Matthew 26:14)

In our first reading today, Isaiah 50:4-9, we reflect on the abuse that the Messiah will undergo. *'For my part I made no resistance, neither did I turn away... I did not cover my face against insult and spittle,'* a clear link to the events of Good Friday.

There are many things to reflect on as we prepare for the next three sacred days of the Triduum, beginning tomorrow. We have a description of the betrayal of Jesus, the preparation for the Last Supper, the account of this supper and the institution of the Eucharist, and the forecast that the disciples would scatter in fear, in spite of their protestations of loyalty.

*Dear Lord,*

*How could they could betray you, they who knew you so well and who served with you for three years. If they could betray you, what hope is there for me?*

*I am unfaithful, fearful, weak, ungrateful, even doubting. I am so unworthy of your unfailing faithfulness and grace. How can I become more resolute?*

*Lord Jesus, fill me with the Holy Spirit. May I go into my garden of Gethsemane and pray to you for strength and courage. May I pray for the whole world. Strengthen me and use me.*

*Give me the boldness to endure persecution and mistreatment. And while that happens, help me look to you instead of at my circumstances. Help me live in the eternal rather than the temporal.*

*And thank you for your forgiveness - for the many times I've already betrayed you and for the many times I will again. But I rest in your strength and your faithfulness!*

*Amen.*

For a hymn today how about 'In Bread We Bring You Lord' as we look forward to celebrating the institution of the sacrament of Eucharist tomorrow evening.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTXPV0UFtTg>

This time last year I put a poem on The Message called 'Two Mothers' and I re-post it today as, firstly, there are many more people receiving this Message than this time last year, but also, I think it's too good to not remind ourselves of it.

*Long time ago, so I have been told,  
Two angels once met on streets paved with gold.  
"By the stars in your crown," said the one to the other  
"I see that on earth, you too, were a mother.  
And by, the blue-tinted halo you wear  
You, too, have known sorrow and deepest despair..."  
"Ah yes," she replied, "I once had a son,  
A sweet little lad, full of laughter and fun."  
"But tell of your child." "Oh, I knew I was blessed  
From the moment I first held him close to my breast,  
And my heart almost burst with the joy of that day."  
"Ah, yes," said the other, "I felt the same way."  
The former continued: "The first steps he took-  
So eager and breathless; the sweet startled look  
Which came over his face – he trusted me so."  
"Ah, yes," said the other, "How well do I know"  
"But soon he had grown to a tall handsome boy,  
So stalwart and kind – and it gave me so much joy  
To have him just walk down the street by my side"  
"Ah yes," said the other, "I felt the same pride."  
"How often I shielded and spared him from pain  
And when he for others was so cruelly slain,  
When they crucified him – and they spat in his face  
How gladly would I have hung there in his place!"  
A moment of silence – "Oh then you are she –  
The mother of Christ"; and she fell on one knee.  
But the Blessed one raised her up, drawing her near,  
And kissed from the cheek of the woman, a tear.  
"Tell me the name of the son you love so,  
That I may share with your grief and your woe."*

*She lifted her eyes, looking straight at the other,*

*“He was Judas Iscariot: I am his mother.”*

Author Unknown

We should remember that Jesus dipped bread into wine with Judas as a sign of love and friendship, and also washed his feet as a sign of servitude towards him, along with the other disciples, and that, in the first place, he was one of Jesus' own chosen twelve. What happened to make Judas turn so? In his remorse and despair, we know that Judas hanged himself. Let us pray for all who take their own lives:

*Dearest Lord,*

*We entrust victims of suicide to your unending mercy and love.*

*While in this life, they felt much pain and found life difficult.*

*May you enfold them now with your love where no pain can find them,*

*but rather your love can heal them.*

*Make them Guardian Angels for those who struggle with life,*

*for those who struggle to see you and the love that is around them.*

*Give them, Lord, kind admittance to your Kingdom, and bring comfort to their families.*

*We ask this, as we ask all things, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Be blest to be able to make the most of this beautiful 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.