

Wednesday May 26th, 2021, Wednesday in Week Eight of Ordinary Time Year One

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.

Lovely to see everyone at NoonDay mass yesterday – let's pray that it won't be long before we can start out Tuesday Coffee mornings again! Happy days!

Today's mid-week passage from Ecclesiasticus begins *'Have mercy on us, Master, and look on us.'* Ecclesiasticus 36:1.4-5,10-17 is a beautiful, and very intense prayer to God for mercy and compassion, especially when dealing with enemies. The prayer praises God for his mercy and love, and also looks forward to a day when the whole Earth will praise God together: *'Grant, Lord, the prayer of your servants... so that all the Earth's inhabitants may acknowledge that you are the Lord, the everlasting God.'* It is certainly a prayer that we can still echo today.

And there's quite a lot going on in today's Gospel, Mark 10:32-35. First of all we have Jesus making a prophecy of his Passion to the Apostles, that they can understand the events to come. As for the Apostles, *'they were in a daze.'* We next have James and John asking to sit beside Jesus in heaven, with Jesus using the opportunity to refer to the sufferings he will experience, and asking the disciples whether they are happy to experience the same. The final paragraph of the Gospel is a little sermon from Jesus on the subject of service, to which all followers of Jesus are called, as Jesus says he himself, *'...did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'* All I the Gospel asks the Apostles – and by extension – each one of us, whether we are really prepared to be followers of Jesus, no matter what that entails.

*O, Heavenly Father,
give me a heart like the heart of Jesus,
a heart more ready to serve than be served,
a heart moved by compassion towards the weak and oppressed,
a heart set upon the coming of your kingdom in the world of men and women.
Help me to take time to serve, with compassion, those who need my help.
Let the power of my Lord Jesus Christ be strong within me
and his peace invade my spirit. Amen.*

'Sweet Heart of Jesus' might be an appropriate hymn today, with the words, *'teach us how to do they blessed will, to follow close the print of thy dear footsteps.'*

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

And today we remember St. Philip Neri. Born in 1515 at an early age, Philip abandoned the chance to become a businessman, moved to Rome from Florence, and devoted his life and individuality to God. After three years of philosophy and theology studies, he gave up any thought of ordination. The next 13 years were spent in a vocation unusual at the time - that of a layperson actively engaged in prayer and the apostolate, serving the poor people of Rome. At the urging of his confessor, Philip was ordained a priest and soon became an outstanding confessor. Some of Philip's followers became priests and lived together in community, the beginning of the Oratory, the religious institute he founded. Philip's advice was sought by many of the prominent figures of his day. He is one of the influential figures of the Counter-Reformation, mainly for converting to personal holiness many of the influential people within the Church itself. St Philip lived opposite the Venerable English College in Rome and he used to greet the English seminarians with the words '*Salvete Flores Martyrum*' (Hail! flowers of the Martyrs) because so many would return to recusant England and be martyred. After spending a day hearing confessions and receiving visitors, Philip Neri suffered a haemorrhage and died on the feast of Corpus Christi in 1595. He was beatified in 1615 and canonized in 1622. Three centuries later, Cardinal Saint John Henry Newman founded the first English-speaking house of the Oratory in London.

*O Holy St. Philip Neri, Patron Saint of joy,
you who trusted Scripture's promise that the Lord is always at hand
and that we need not have anxiety about anything,
in your compassion heal our worries and sorrows
and lift the burdens from our hearts.
Keep us safe through your loving intercession,
and may the joy of the Holy Spirit which filled your heart, St. Philip,
transform our lives and bring us peace. Amen.*

Last week Paul sent us some photos of the Church ground before the building of the Hall, and this week he has sent us three pictures of the foundations of the hall being laid – quite an operation by the looks of it. Would we be allowed to close All Hallows Road now? Cheers Paul. And from the Letter to Timothy 6:18-19: '*Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life.*'

I hope your week is going well, and that the children from school are enjoying the first week of the half-term holiday. Don't forget that there is no Thursday Noonday mass tomorrow – normal service will be resumed next week!

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.