

Thursday May 27th, 2021, Thursday in Week Eight of Ordinary Time Year One,
& The Feast of Christ, Eternal Priest.

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.

And I'm sure I don't need to remind you that there is no NoonDay Mass today, but we'll be back to normal (whatever 'normal' is) next week.

After yesterday's prayer for mercy from Ecclesiasticus, today we have great, poetic, prayer of praise. Ecclesiasticus 42:15025 gives praise for all the many and varied works of God throughout history and the world – from the very moments of creation. We cannot hope to know all the incredible works of God, indeed it is impossible to describe them all, and yet his glory shines through each and every one of them. And God knows them all, as nothing is hidden from him, and not even the depths of our hearts, which neatly reflects Psalm 139:

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.
Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*

And here is one of the most beautiful musical versions of that Psalm to sing along to: 'O Lord, You search Me And You Know Me,' by Bernadette Farrell:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEGc3_D19Vo

In today's Gospel, Mark 10:46-52, we have the story of the blind beggar at the roadside, who, defying those who try and shut him up, calls out to Jesus, as he knows Jesus truly is the one who can heal him. Because of his faith and commitment, he is cured. *'Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you.' And immediately his sight returned, and he followed him along the road.'* Faith, leads to healing, which leads to the following of Jesus.

*God our heavenly Father,
Like the blind beggar Bartimaeus:
teach us to call on Jesus when He is near,
teach us to call on Jesus when our case is hopeless,
teach us to keep calling when no answer comes,
teach us to keep calling when the very people who should be encouraging us are offering
nothing but rebuke and discouragement,
teach us to be bold in our praying, as well as persistent,
and teach us that whenever your answer comes, to follow you with all our hearts.
Through the healer, Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And we have another Feast today, again, as with Mary, Mother of the Church on Monday, quite a recent Feast to be added to the Liturgical Calendar, that of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest. Celebrated annually on the first Thursday after Pentecost approval for this feast was first granted by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in 1987, but only introduced into the liturgy and Divine Office in England and Wales in 2018. In the Letter to the Hebrews in particular Jesus is presented as the new High Priest, renewing and completing in his sacrifice on the Cross the traditional worship of the Temple in Jerusalem. This feast day focuses on Jesus as priest in the Eucharist, our central act of worship, and also enables us today to pray for priests who share in a particular way in his ministry, as well as for vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and active laity.

*O God, who for the glory of your majesty
and the salvation of the human race,
made your Only Begotten Son the Eternal High Priest,
grant that, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,
those whom he has chosen as ministers and stewards of his mysteries
may be found faithful in carrying out the ministry they have received.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.*

The hymn 'Hail redeemer, King Divine' acknowledges Jesus as 'Priest and Lamb', so let us make that our hymn today. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMV7737SdiY>

Two delightful pictures to share today, which show two of our youngest parishioners demonstrating true faith and the following of our Lord – one of them making a beautiful prayer in front of The Sacred Heart, having received a Blessing at Communion, the other making sure his Grandma is properly sanitised, and covid safe for worship! An example to us all! As we pray for all our children, let us turn to the Scriptures for inspiration:

'Let love and faithfulness never leave our children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on a tablet of their hearts.' (from Proverbs 3:3)

'May our children always be strong and courageous in their character and in their actions.' (from Deuteronomy 3:16)

'Create in them a pure heart, O God, and let that purity of heart be shown in their actions.' (from Psalm 51:10)

'Grant, Lord, that our children may learn to live a life of love, through the Spirit who dwells in them.' (from Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 5:2)

'May our children grow to find Your Word more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb.' (from Psalm 19:10)

'Lord, may our children always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.' (from 1 Thessalonians 5:15)

And most importantly: *'May our children be filled with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.'* (from 1 Thessalonians 1:6)

Let's be blessed to welcome all our children to our worship. As Nelson Mandela said, *'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.'* And perhaps no keener revelation of our Churches'. Have a wonderful Thursday, with as many opportunities to smile like a child as possible, however old you are.

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.