

Thursday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, Thursday in Week Nine of Ordinary Time Year II

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.

Bit of a dully morning, but that doesn't mean we have to make it a dull day!

So, on the with the story of Tobias (the biblical figure, not the Presbytery cat). You'll have to keep up with the plot. Tobias was asked by his father to travel to collect money that he had invested. Without realising it his companion was the angel Raphael. They stayed at Raguel's house, the father of Sarah. Tobias asked for the hand of Sarah in marriage and with much misgiving, Raguel agreed. Tobias and Sarah prayed for protection and were granted it. *'This time the prayer of each of them found favour before the glory of God, and Raphael was sent to bring remedy to them both.'*

And in the Gospel, Mark 12:28-34 Jesus is once again being questioned about which are the greatest Commandments. He gave the answer that every good Jew should know - and every good Christian for that matter, *'You must love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength... You must love your neighbour as yourself.'* For once one of the Scribes boldly agrees with Jesus, and it is good to have this, reminding us that not all the Scribes were totally against the person of Jesus, and some were open to his words in their own personal journey of faith. Seeing the Scribes wisdom, Jesus beautifully tells him, *'You are not far from the Kingdom of God.'*

*Bless us with Love, O Merciful God;  
That we may Love as you Love!  
That we may show patience, tolerance,  
Kindness, caring and love to all!  
Give me knowledge; O giver of Knowledge,  
That I may be one with all my family of creation!  
O Compassionate One, grant compassion unto us;  
That we may help all fellow souls in need!  
Bless us with your Love O God.  
Bless us with your Love.*

Together let us sing 'O The Love of My Lord Is The Essence,' with a rather lovely video as well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ8tpLIJ0TQ>

And our memorial today is that of St. Charles Lwanga and his companions. Charles was one of twenty-two Ugandan martyrs who converted from paganism. He was baptized November 1885, a year before his death, and became a moral leader. He was the chief of the royal pages and was considered the strongest athlete of the court. He instructed his friends in the Catholic Faith and inspired and encouraged his companions to remain faithful and true to Church teachings. Mwanga was a superstitious pagan king who originally was tolerant of Catholicism. However, his chief assistant, Katikiro, slowly convinced him that Christians were a threat to his rule. The premise was if these Christians would not bow to him, nor make sacrifices to their pagan god, nor pillage, massacre, nor make war, what would happen if his whole kingdom converted to Catholicism? When Charles was sentenced to death, by being burned to death, by Mwanga's order on June 3, 1886, he asked to be untied so that he could arrange the sticks, and then lay down upon them. When the executioner said that Charles would be burned slowly to death, Charles replied by saying that he was very glad to be dying for the True Faith. He made no cry of pain but prayed, 'Katonda! (O my God!).' Pope Paul VI canonized Charles Lwanga and his companions on June 22, 1964.

*O God,  
who have made the blood of Martyrs the seed of Christians,  
mercifully grant that the field which is your Church,  
watered by the blood shed by Saint Charles Lwanga and his companions,  
may be fertile and always yield you an abundant harvest.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.*

And, lest we be complacent, let us make this prayer for present day Christian Martyrs:

*Lord, so great is our love for you  
That even though we walk in a world  
where speaking your name can mean certain death  
Your faithful still speak it  
And speak it all the louder.  
Help us work for a world where all may speak their creeds  
And pray their prayers  
Without fear of violence.  
Hear the prayers of those who abide with you  
in dangerous times  
and in dark valleys,  
And who die with your name on their lips.  
Draw them quickly to your side*

*Where they might know eternal peace.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And whilst we are reading through the Book of Tobit and his son Tobias, the 'other' Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, keeps pricking up his ears, wondering when he is going to get a look in, as he considers it far too long since he has starred in a Message. So here he is! Where is he? Hiding in the Stationary Cupboard again! And yesterday's listen on the prom, I hear you ask? I'm afraid it had to be 'Cats'!

I look forward to seeing some of you at NoonDay Mass. Have a great day!

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.