

Friday June 4th, 2021, Friday 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.

So here we are at the end of the week, and nearly the end of our half term break – only six or so weeks to the summer holidays! At least we seem to have a lovely day to finish of our hols!

Sadly we miss the great prayer of Tobias and Sarah on their wedding night, as it is so beautiful, but the Church, in her wisdom, wants us to whiz on with the story. So here goes. By the time of Tobit 11:5-17, Tobias was married, went off and got his father's monetary investments and eventually set off and returned home. They received a great welcome. Remember how Tobit was blinded by the sparrow droppings on Tuesday (keep up!). Well, Tobias, on the advice of the angel Raphael, placed the gall of the fish they had caught on the outward journey on Tobit's eyes. And was able to miraculously pull away a skin from the corner of Tobit's eyes, and Tobit exclaimed, 'I can see, my son, the light of my eyes,' and went on to pray:

'Blessed be God!

Blessed be his great name!

Blessed be all his holy angels!

Blessed be his great name for ever more!

For he has scourged me

And now has had pity on me

And I see my son Tobias!'

Tobit goes on to meet his daughter in law for the first time, and holds a great party for all the people in Ninevah. There is a lovely conclusion to the whole story tomorrow.

In our very short Gospel, Mark 12:35-37 Jesus hints at the fact that he is a man of David's line, but also God, David's Lord - fully divine and fully human.

Son of God and Son of Man, Jesus, we believe in You; We adore You; and we love You; have mercy on us sinners.

We remember Your words to the disciples: 'Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened.' Trusting in your infinite goodness and trusting that You always keep your promise, we place before you all our intentions.

Thank you, Son of God and Son of Man, for listening attentively to our prayers all the time. We hope that You will ask this before Our Heavenly Father. And, if what we ask for may not be good

for our salvation and sanctification, we trust that you will grant us instead what we truly need, so that one day we may be with You for all eternity enjoying that ultimate happiness of Heaven.

All this we ask through the intercession of your Holy Mother, Mary, and in Your powerful and Most Holy Name, Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man. Amen

For a gentle hymn today let us sing 'Word Made Flesh, Son of God,' with its always appropriate chorus, 'Come Lord Jesus, come again'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDhu4hYKwJc>

Well, the Church in her wisdom might not have given us the prayer of Tobias and Sarah on the wedding night, but I can't resist sharing it with you, firstly because it is so beautiful, and secondly because it is an important piece of Scripture for us because it is the basis of the great Nuptial Blessing which we pray over Brides and Grooms in Wedding services. Remember, this prayer is well over two thousand years old, and we are still using it in services today. As you read it, perhaps you might remember all our couples who have been forced to put wedding plans on hold because of the events of the last eighteen months, and look forward as they slowly begin to make new preparations. If you remember, Sarah had been widowed seven times, but for the first time, her marital union was given to God in a spirit of prayer, and all was very well indeed:

When Tobias and Sarah were alone behind closed doors, Tobias got up from the bed and said to his wife, 'Get up, dear. Let's pray for the Lord to be merciful and to protect us'. Sarah got up so that they could pray together and ask God for his protection. Then Tobias prayed:

'God of our ancestors, you are worthy of praise.

*May your name be honoured forever and ever
by all your creatures in heaven and on earth.*

*You created Adam and gave him his wife Eve
to be his helper and support.*

They became the parents of the whole human race.

You said, 'It is not good for man to live alone.

I will make a suitable helper for him.'

*Lord, I have chosen Sarah because it is right,
Out of love, not earthly passion.*

Please be merciful to us

and grant that we may grow old together.'

Then they both said, 'Amen'.

And, like Tobias and Sarah, here's a couple of weddings that *did* take place: my brother and sister-in-law thirty years ago, and sister and brother-in-law twenty-one years ago, although my sister's was not without its problems - a week before the wedding my Church in Cottam suffered an Arson attack, leaving the sanctuary completely unusable, and the weekend of the wedding there was a petrol strike,

so people (including the Australian and London contingent) had to use many and varied ways to gather up in Cleator for the wedding. I seem to recall I hitched a lift to West Cumbria with the Vicar General, Fr. Paul Embry, who had only popped in to Cottam in Preston to check on the damage of the Church, and ended up driving me right across the diocese! As you can see, all was well in the end!

Enjoy the end of the week and the start of the weekend!

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.