

Monday June 7th, 2021, Monday in the Tenth Week 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.

And a beautiful start to the week it is – and back to school for many of us!

Today we start two weeks in the company of St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. Corinth was a leading city in Greece - often described as the gateway between the east and the west. In Paul's time it was a Roman colony and had people of many races living and working there. Paul had gone there during his second missionary journey, and developed a deep and lasting relationship with the Christian community there. They tended to be over-enthusiastic at times, and had strange ideas on the characteristics of an apostle, and some believed that Paul did not live up to their criteria, so he had great difficulty in trying to restrain them and keep them on a steady track – the Letter gets very personal in places. He wrote many letters to them and only two have survived; the Second Letter which we begin today may be a compilation of a number of letters. As usual Paul begins with a greeting from himself and Timothy. He then praises God for giving us his consolation in the midst of all our sorrows – reminding us to share that consolation with others: *'Sharing our sufferings, you will also share our consolations.'*

Today we move to the Gospel of St. Matthew, and begin a reading of the great Sermon on the Mount, St. Matthew's putting together of all Jesus' teaching about how our lives on earth are part of one great journey to heaven, to be with Christ for ever. The Sermon begins with 'The Beatitudes', a kind of manifesto, instructions, as it were, a guide to how we should live on earth. And how beautiful they are, not some much giving us do-this do-not-do-that injunctions like the Ten Commandments, but rather describing the kind of people we should be, and the beautiful consequences of the actions of such people. The following prayer quotes, and prays upon, this wonderful passage of Scripture:

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Keep us from being preoccupied with money and worldly goods, and with trying to increase them at the expense of justice.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.' Help us not to be ruthless with one another, and to eliminate the discord and violence that exists in the world around us.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.' Let us not be impatient under our own burdens and unconcerned about the burdens of others.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled.' Make us thirst for you, the fountain of all holiness, and actively spread your influence in our private lives and in society.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.' Grant that we may be quick to forgive and slow to condemn.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.' Free us from our senses and our evil desires, and help us to fix our eyes on you.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.' Aid us to make peace in our families, in our country, and in the world.

Lord Jesus, you said, 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.' Make us willing to suffer for the sake of right rather than to practice injustice; and do not let us discriminate against our neighbours and oppress and persecute them.

Amen.

So what else can we sing but 'The Beatitudes' in that jolly version by Christian composer Mike Anderson, 'The Kingdom of Heaven.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GNtmlbp3ZE>

When I was looking up prayers based on the Beatitudes I also came across this brief prayer which beautifully sums up Matthew 5, and it's too good not to publish:

Lord, make us:

One with you and each other,

One in your great work of peace,

One in your words and ways,

One in commitment to reconciliation and righteousness,

One in facing of falsehood,

One in the bloody bonds of persecution,

One in your joy,

One in your promises,

One on earth and one in heaven.

Amen.

Back to school today, as I said, so I trust that everyone, staff and pupils, have had a good break and are ready for the last few weeks of the Summer term. It'll be the end of a very strange year and a half, but slowly we are coming together more and more. From next week I will be celebrating Mass both here at SB's school, and also Holy Family, so it will be nice to get back to that regular timetable of sharing the Sacraments with our children.

Compassionate God, be with us on our journey during this last half-term of the school year. Remind us that You are always present whenever we seek You. Thank You for walking alongside us

even in our most difficult days. Hold our loved ones ever close to you and welcome those who have died into your healing presence.

As we begin these last few weeks of school inspire us to fully embrace our studies, and to be open to your Holy Spirit of wisdom. May we use our talents for the good of all about us, and to honour you. Guide us that we might benefit fully from this time of home learning.

We pray for those who are unwell, frail or vulnerable bring them to healing, peace, and safety. We pray for all who work to heal and end injustice in our world Sustain and support them when they tire and bless the success of their labours.

We place all that we are, and all that we will become, our fellow pupils and teachers, our families, friendships, communities, and the World, into the tender care of Jesus Christ, Your son and our friend and brother. Amen

And lastly a picture of the beautiful wreath in memory of the late Stephen Haydon which, after his Requiem last Monday evening, was placed on the cross outside the Church, which, many years ago, was erected and placed there by his father, John. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Have a beautiful start to the week.

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.