

Wednesday June 23rd, 2021, Wednesday in the Twelfth Week of Ordinary Time Year I

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 late this morning, as was having a meeting in school and time just ran away! Nearly time for lunch...

As the story of Abram really gets going, we see, in Genesis 15:1-12, not for the last time believe you me, Abram's faith is being tested. He had no heir, and yet he is told his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. And while Abram doesn't fully understand, and suffers from night terrors at the thought, he still puts his whole faith in God, and, *'That day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram in these terms; 'To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the River Euphrates.'* His journey as our Father in Faith has begun.

A good person will produce good results, *'a sound tree produces good fruit'* as Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:15-20. But as with yesterday Jesus is keen to point out that this is not easy, not least because of the many false prophets, *'who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath are ravenous wolves.'*

Dear Lord,

I pray today to ask for help.

Help me to have the actions, words, and wisdom necessary to bear good fruit.

May the things I think, the things I say, and the deeds I do

show other people the love of Christ.

Help me to be a force for good, and an influence on others.

Help me not to follow falsehoods that would lead me away from you.

Give me the grace to be a fruit producing branch of You, the true vine.

Amen.

In the middle of the week let us 'Be Still For The Presence Of the Lord,' praying that we will recognise his true presence amongst us. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJMaOxdu6B4>

And our very English Saint today is Ethelreda, born around 640, a princess named who was also known Audrey. She married at a very young age, but was widowed after three years; she married again, a very young man, this time for reasons of state. With plot twists too numerous to mention (really, it's like a daytime soap opera), eventually, Ethelreda's husband left and married someone else,

while Ethelreda took the veil, and founded the great abbey of Ely, where she lived an austere life. She eventually died of an enormous and unsightly tumour on her neck, which she is said to have gratefully accepted as Divine retribution for all the bejewelled necklaces she had worn in her early years, and so, along with our good old friend St. Blaise, she is Patron Saint of neck and throat ailments.

*Eternal God,
who bestowed such grace upon your servant Ethelreda
that she gave herself wholly to the life of prayer
and to the service of your true religion:
grant that we, like her,
may so live our lives on earth seeking your kingdom
that by your guiding
we may be joined to the glorious fellowship of your Saints,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

So today's gospel gives us one of the suggested origins of the phrase 'wolf in sheep's clothing' denoting a person that appears friendly or harmless but is really hostile. The phrase is also attributed to Aesop, the writer of the fables, and as his writings are pre-Christian it is sometimes suggested that his tales were known in the middle East before and during the time of Christ, but no one is really sure. There is also the phrase 'a sheep in sheep's clothing', used to characterise a person whose lack of courage and determination is as real as it gives the impression of being. It is generally said that Winston Churchill used the phrase about Clement Attlee, of whom he also said was 'a modest man, who has much to be modest about.' Good old Churchill, never short of a good quote. Incidentally, a good tip for quizzes: if ever there is a question on TV Quiz Shows regarding Prime Ministers, always answer Churchill, Thatcher, or the present incumbent of Number 10. You'll invariably be right! Believe me, I speak from experience...!

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.