

Monday June 28th, 2021, Monday in the Thirteenth 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.

And I trust everyone had a great weekend – lovely to see lots of people at our masses!

And so we begin our second week looking at the story of Abraham, our Father in Faith. Abraham would be blessed in his descendants because he was a just man. Evil men would be punished, but here, in genesis 18:16-33, we see Abraham pleading with the Lord to spare the people if at least fifty, the forty, the thirty, twenty, and finally ten virtuous people remain in the city of Sodom. An God relents, *'I will not destroy it,' He replied, 'for the sake of ten.'*

In our short gospel today, Matthew 8:18-22, we see people who want to follow Jesus, but don't have the required commitment. Full commitment is necessary if we are to follow Jesus. We pray for that commitment.

Lord Jesus I pray that I may grow in the awareness that you are really my sustenance and nobody else.

I pray you help me to continuously increase in the recognition that only you can make me become somebody in life.

I pray to rest in your strength as I realize that I am weak in my flesh.

I pray that I may be solely and wholly committed to my walk with you all the days of my life.

I pray that I may be wholly contented with my life with you for the rest of my life.

I pray that I may not turn away from the path of righteousness for your namesake.

I pray that the devil will not have a chance to sift me from the kingdom of our heavenly father.

I pray that my reliance in you may grow deeper today and that my assurance in you may grow wider.

I pray that my faith in you may grow stronger and my zeal for you may grow bigger.

I pray that I may continue to rely on your wisdom and I will no longer lean on my own understanding.

I pray that I may yield to your instructions at all times and make you first in all that I do.

I pray for commitment, to follow my Lord.

'All My Hope On God Is Founded' would make an appropriate hymn after that prayer, methinks.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4zX9xZCN0o>

And today we remember St. Irenaeus. Little is known about his life, but he holds a special place in the life of the Church because of his writings. He was probably born about the year 125, in one of those maritime provinces of Asia Minor, and influenced by St. Polycarp who had known the twelve Apostles, especially St. John. The writings of St. Irenaeus laid the foundations of Christian theology and also delivered the Catholic Faith from the real danger of the doctrines of heretics. His works, written in Greek but quickly translated to Latin, was widely circulated and succeeded in particular in dealing a death-blow to Gnosticism, a heresy which, amongst many other things, denied the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ. The date of death of St. Irenaeus is not known, but it is believed to be in the year 202. He is honoured as a martyr, though details of his death are not known. He was buried in Lyon, but his remains and tomb were destroyed during the Reformation.

*Almighty God,
you inspired Saint Irenaeus to teach your divine truth faithfully,
and to preserve at all cost the bond of unity in your church.
May we follow after his example,
becoming ministers of peace and reconciliation among all your people.
We ask this through Christ the Lord. Amen.*

And this is one of St. Irenaeus' very own prayers, it's rather lovely – especially to devotees of 'The Great Pottery Throwdown' (of which you may have guessed, I am one!):

*It is not thou that shapest God
it is God that shapest thee.
If thou art the work of God
await the hand of the artist
who does all things in due season.
Offer Him thy heart,
soft and tractable,
and keep the form
in which the artist has fashioned thee.
Let thy clay be moist,
lest thou grow hard
and lose the imprint of his fingers.
Amen.*

Last week we congratulated my niece Antonia on passing her driving test. Well, this week we congratulate her and my sister – as my niece actually drove her mother in her car for the first time, as the picture shows. My sisters says we should also congratulate my brother-in-law for the excellent lessons he gave his daughter! I remember the first time I took my mother out for a spin after passing my test in 1994 (I did my lessons in Blackpool when I was a deacon at St. Kents'). Halfway through

the journey I stopped and made my mother drive as her nerves, sharp intakes of breath, and the fact that she was obviously mimicking my footwork on the pedals, was freaking me out so much! Here's a prayer for spiritual guidance – and not just when driving cars!

Lord,

Your plans are far better than anything I could possibly map out!

You know Your way around this planet, because You created this planet.

So be my GPS, Father!

Lead me every step of this trip.

Guide me along the way with Your loving hand, and show me which way to turn.

Help me to follow You, keeping an open heart and a listening ear to Your directives,

rerouting me whenever necessary to get me back on the path

that will yield the most fruit in my life and for Your Kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Don't forget there is an extra Mass tonight for the vigil of St. Paul at 7pm.

Safe driving, y'all – and not just when in your cars...!

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.