

Friday July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, Friday 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.

Early start as I have an 8:30 funeral at Carleton (if I set off at 8:am I tend to avoid the school traffic, the same coming back, so it is not too bad), although I was woken up by an somewhat worse for wear woman at the door at four-thirty this morning demanding the bus fare to Manchester, so I've been wide awake for a little while longer than it might seem! Hey ho!

In our first reading from Genesis 23:1-4.19.24:1-8.62-67 we are told that Abraham's wife, Sarah, dies at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven. After his mother died, Isaac was warned by Abraham not to marry one of the Canaanites, even though they are living in their land, but one of his own kin. He eventually met Rebekah and married her. *'And so Isaac was consoled for the loss of his mother.'*

Whilst in our Gospel Matthew 9:9-13 we have the call of St. Matthew, sitting at his customs house, who, at the call of the Lord immediately, *'Got up and followed him.'* I have said it before, and I'll say it again, I love the immediacy of Matthew's response to the call of the Lord. There is no thinking, no worrying that he is a sinner, no hanging around waiting to get to know the Lord and his teachings before he is prepared to go with him. He follows him. Maybe he was waiting for the call, maybe he was fed up with his hated life as a tax collector, maybe he realises that the riches they were bringing hi were not bringing him happiness. Would that we all should follow the Lord with such enthusiasm, devotion and alacrity! Let us seek the guidance of the Lord in following him now and every day:

*O Lord, my God,*

*help me to trust you with my decisions and my future.*

*Let me lean on you with all my heart instead of relying on my own imperfect understanding.*

*Give me clear guidance in my life, Lord.*

*As I submit myself to you, I know that you will direct my paths*

*and I can have confidence that your direction is always the best way to go.*

*Help me not allow the distractions of life drown out your call. Amen.*

And directly following on from the call of Matthew, other tax collectors and sinners meet with Jesus, where Jesus is criticised for eating with them. Jesus reminds his followers that he has come not to call the virtuous, but sinners, and the call is to be merciful, certainly not judgemental. We pray that we can be merciful, and this is St. Faustina's Prayer to be Merciful:

*Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbour's souls and come to their rescue.*

*Help me, that my ears may be merciful, so that I may give heed to my neighbours' needs and not be indifferent to their pains and moanings.*

*Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbour, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all.*

*Help me, O Lord, that my hands may be merciful and filled with good deeds, so that I may do only good to my neighbours and take upon myself the more difficult and toilsome tasks.*

*Help me, that my feet may be merciful, so that I may hurry to assist my neighbour overcoming my own fatigue and weariness. My true rest is in the service of my neighbour.*

*Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbour. I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus. I will bear my own suffering in silence. May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me.*

*Amen.*

‘I Watch the Sunrise’ would make a lovely hymn to end the week (and I was awake to watch it this morning!): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vm-A5NikI8U>

Another weekend in lockdown beckons, with no news about, well, anything. So let us pray:

*In our moments of doubt  
and unbelief,  
when worldly pressure  
or circumstance  
become the distance  
between us,  
draw near, we pray.  
Remind us of the grace  
that we first knew,  
your healing touch,  
the Father's love,  
the Spirit's breath.  
Grant us courage,  
a faith that endures  
and the sure knowledge  
that you are with us  
in our journeying,  
now and always.*

I started yesterday's Message by saying it was very a dark start to the month, as, when I was sending the Message, before 9am, it was indeed looking like a very dark day. Happily then the sun broke through and it was the most gorgeous start to the month! Over in Hong Kong, however, my brother writes to say that the start of the month weather has not been so kind at all, in fact they have had 'Black' rainstorms, meaning that some end of year events in their schools over there had to be cancelled, as, on Black Rain days, everyone is advised to stay at home! For my sister-in-law every rain cloud has a silver lining, as she has used the local weather there to be her latest inspiration for her 'nail art.' Every cloud, indeed...!

Please pray for the repose of the soul of John James Robertson whose funeral I will be celebrating at Carleton at 8:30am this morning. *May he rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Sunshine or showers, 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.