

Tuesday July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Tuesday in the Fourteenth 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.

It's the usual Tuesday timetable of two school Masses, with our noonday Mass here in Church, so better craic on with the Message!

We are moving along quickly through the early history of the Jews. Today we have the incident when Jacob had a meeting with an angel of God and showed how strong he was. It is here, in Genesis 32:23-33, that Jacob's name is changed by the angel; *'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have been strong against God, you shall prevail against men.'* We also have mention of his eleven sons, who will form the next part of the story.

And in our Gospel, Matthew 9:32-38, Jesus continues to carry out his work of healing and casting out devils - though the Pharisees remained sceptical. Jesus is sad because the people are without good leaders, he said, *'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the Harvest to send labourers to his Harvest.'* Traditional this phrase is used when praying for Vocations to the Priesthood, but today, let us make a prayer that coming out of our Covid times, we might all play our part in once again building up the Church of God, in the world, and here in our own Parish:

*God of hope,  
our hearts overflow with gratitude for your abiding presence during these exceedingly difficult and troubled times.*

*May the flames of hope remain aglow among individuals, families, communities, and nations during the pandemic, and as we seek to rebuild our lives, our communities, our Church, our Parish.*

*May our trust in you be affirmed, especially as we continue to navigate each day the challenges that have confronted us, and the great challenges before us.*

*Let all that we are wait quietly before you, O God, knowing that our hope is in you.*

*By your Spirit, may we be grounded in the hope that is proclaimed in your word: you are our rock and salvation, our fortress where we will not be shaken.*

*We pray in the name of One who, by his resurrection, has given us the hope of life eternal,  
Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

And 'All My Hope On God Is Founded.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew>

I also found this 'Post-Covid' Poem by Laura Kelly Fanucci. It's rather good;

*When this is over,  
may we never again take for granted  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbours  
A crowded cinema  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine check-up  
The school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.  
When this ends  
may we find  
that we have become  
more like the people  
we wanted to be  
we were called to be  
we hoped to be  
and may we stay that way –  
better for each other.'*

And today we remember beautiful Saint Maria Goretti, a poor peasant child, born in Italy in 1890, the third of six children. On July 5, 1902, Alessandro, a young man who lived and worked with the Goretti family, overtook her and demanded that she submit to him, but she told him that it would be a sin. Enraged, Alessandro stabbed her 14 times in her heart, and then fled. While in the hospital, Maria was asked if she forgave Alessandro, she said, 'Yes, for the love of Jesus I forgive him... and I want him to be with me in Paradise.' She died on July 6. Alessandro spent 30 years in prison. While there, he had a vision of Maria. He saw a garden where a young girl, dressed in white, was gathering lilies. She smiled, and came near him, and encouraged him to accept an armful of the lilies. As he took them, each lily became a still white flame. Maria then disappeared. Alessandro's conversion was complete. After he was released from prison he asked Maria's mother to forgive him. He then became a gardener in a Capuchin monastery for the rest of his life. Along with 30 other witnesses, Alessandro testified as to Maria's sanctity during her Cause of Beatification. In 1950, she was canonized in a ceremony attended by a quarter million people, including her mother, the first mother ever to see her

child canonized, as well as Alessandro. She is the Patron Saint of youth, teenage girls, poverty, purity, and forgiveness. Maria Goretti's intercession can be called upon for many causes, but here is a prayer for those of us who need help to forgive someone:

*O St. Maria Goretti, beautiful model of mercy, pray for me.*

*God's mercy is the only hope for mankind. I know we are called to imitate our Father's mercy to those around us, but it is hard, and I often fail.*

*But you, even at the age of 11, were strong and courageous enough to offer mercy to your attacker, the one who hurt you the very most.*

*Please pray that I will be able to do the same to those who hurt me. Please pray that I will not consider their unworthiness, but that I may consider our Lord, as you did.*

*And this prayer I make through my forgiving Lord and Saviour,*

*Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.*

*Amen.*

Well after Cats and Cranes, it's time for foxes! Ezekiel 13:4 tells us that '*O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins,*' but what about foxes among cats? My mate Fr. Phil in Essex sent me this picture of his cats, Tabs and Barney, with the friendly neighbourhood fox (at least I hope he's friendly) in his presbytery garden last week. Well, if, as Isaiah says, the lion can lie down with the lamb...!

And on with the day – with God's blessings abounding.

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.