

Wednesday July 7th, 2021, Wednesday 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.

A fresh and breezy early start to the day, as I head to the Crematorium before our public 9am Mass.

The first Old Testament readings for the next three days tell us the story of, I've got to say it, 'Joseph and Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.' In Genesis 41:5-57, 42:5-7.17-24 Jacob's youngest son, Joseph was special to his father, who made him a coloured coat. Naturally the brothers were very jealous when he had dreams of how he would rule over his brothers and intended to kill him, but sold him instead and he ended up in Egypt. Later, through his powers of interpreting dreams he was made Pharaoh's righthand man. Because there was a famine in Canaan Israel sent his sons to Egypt for grain and they met with Joseph, but didn't recognise him. Joseph played with them, demanding that they send their youngest brother, Benjamin. (That's two thirds of the show, in case you are following with a CD).

In Matthew 10:1-7 the apostles are named and sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Simon Peter: Originally named Simon, Peter was a fisherman from Galilee. Jesus changed his name to Peter, which means 'rock'. The apostle Peter was the first leader of the early Church and according to Christian tradition, was crucified in Rome under Emperor Nero. When he was given the choice of how he should die, he said, 'I'd like to be crucified up-side-down because I am unworthy to die as my Lord died.' All four Gospels state that during Jesus' Last Supper with his apostles, Jesus predicted that Peter would deny knowledge of him, stating that he would disown him before the rooster crowed the next morning.

Andrew: Andrew the Apostle was born between AD 5 and AD 10 and was initially a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. Andrew was also one of the four disciples closest to Jesus. He was the first of the disciples to be called to follow Jesus. Exactly for this reason the liturgy of the Byzantine Church honours him with the nickname: 'Protokletos', which means, precisely, 'the first called'.

James (the son of Zebedee): James the Greater is described as one of the first disciples to join Jesus. He was also the first disciple to be martyred, when in AD 44 Herod Agrippa ordered his death. James the Apostle is also famed for spreading Christianity in Spain.

John: listed as the youngest apostle, his brother being James, author of the fourth Gospel, and self-described as 'the one whom Jesus loved.'

Philip: Philip is described as a disciple from the city of Bethsaida. The disciple Philip was also among those surrounding John the Baptist when the latter first pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Bartholomew: always referred to as Nathanael. Bartholomew is a Hebrew surname meaning 'son of Tolmai.' So Nathanael is the son of Tolmai, or Nathanael Bar-Tolmei. In the gospel of John, Jesus says of Bartholomew, 'Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.'

Thomas: Thomas is widely known as 'Doubting Thomas' because he doubted Jesus' resurrection when first told of it (as we were reminded last week). Thomas later, confessed his faith, 'My Lord and my God,' on seeing Jesus' crucifixion wounds.

Matthew: Matthew was one of the witnesses of the Ascension of Jesus. He was also from Galilee and as a tax collector, he would have been literate in Aramaic and Greek.

James (the son of Alphaeus): James son of Alphaeus, also known as 'James the Less' spent three years with Jesus witnessing his teachings and miracles. He is also labelled 'the minor', 'the little', 'the lesser', or 'the younger', according to translation.

Judas Thaddaeus: The apostle Jude as we tend to know him generally identified with Thaddeus, and is also variously called Jude of James, Jude Thaddaeus, Judas Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus. He is also often shown in icons with a flame around his head. This represents his presence at Pentecost, when he received the Holy Spirit with the other apostles.

Simon the Zealot; Simon was 28 years old when he became one of the apostles and supposedly preached the Gospel in Egypt. Simon is also one of the most obscure apostles.

Judas Iscariot: What do we know about the disciple Judas Iscariot? Judas was the only disciple to come from Judah and not Galilee. He is renowned for betraying Jesus to the Sanhedrin in the Garden of Gethsemane by kissing him in exchange for 30 pieces of silver. The Bible tells us that he was the treasurer for the disciples but that: *'he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.'*

In honour of the Apostles, let us pray 'The Apostles' Creed', the great statement of our faith that bears their name:

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord,*

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Let us sing 'Here I Am, Lord,' hoping to answer the call of Jesus as the prophet did in the hymn, and the Apostles did in the Scriptures (rather a lovely video, too).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcXOkht8w7c>

Yesterday morning I had a great surprise at the Year 4 Mass at St. Bernadette's. The children had been focusing on how we show that we are followers of Christ, and they presented me with this rather lovely card to thank me for helping them in the following of the teachings of Jesus as members of God's family. Huge thanks to them, and for all the children and staff of our schools who do so much to spread the Word of God in our community and in our families.

Almighty God,

We give you thanks for our schools.

We give you thanks for all the teachers and staff who work there,

We give you thanks for all the children who learn, play, and pray there.

We pray our schools will continue to be places of great discovery, adventure, and creativity.

May they be places where all love to learn and where all learn to love,

A place where everyone is respected and all are deeply valued,

And where everyone follows the teachings of your Son, our great teacher, Jesus,

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

And especial congratulations to Mason in Year 4 for the rather good picture of me on the cover of the card! Well done!

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mandy Mellenger whose funeral I am celebrating first thing this morning at Carleton. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

And do your best to have the best of all possible days!

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.