

Monday July 12th, 2021, Monday in the Fifteenth 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.

Well, a somewhat disappointing evening, but well done to the England Team for making it so far and putting up such a great game.

Well after our feel-good story of Joseph and his dreamcoat last week, the mood in our first readings this week changes. The good of Joseph is forgotten, and the descendants of Abraham are now a downtrodden people in Egypt as we begin the book of Exodus 1:8-14.22, with the Egyptians making life unbearable for the Israelites. Their numbers were getting too big for Pharaoh ordered that all new born males be thrown in the river, as he felt threatened that the number of Israelites was too great.

Some final instructions are given to the disciples, and to us, in Matthew 10:34-11:1 today. Being a follower of Christ involves much hardship as many will not accept his teachings, and Jesus is honest that this may cause division, even among families. But there is great reward for those who listen and respond to the Apostles words: *'Anyone who welcome you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.'*

Gracious God,

Thank you for the gift of today. Refresh me.

Invite me to welcome your presence in each person that I meet

And every event that I encounter.

Teach me when to speak and when to listen

When to ponder and when to share.

In moments of challenge and decision

Attune my heart to the whisperings of your Wisdom.

When my day goes well, may I rejoice.

When it grows difficult, surprise me with new possibilities.

When life is overwhelming, call me to sabbath moments

To restore your Peace and Harmony.

May my living today reveal your Goodness.

And may I welcome this day, and You, in every moment.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And as we welcome this day, let us sing ‘This Day God Gives Me.’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVnZVR90MMI>

Yesterday evening I kept the filming of the children’s Morning Prayer video till after the football, as I had to know what I was going to be praying about.

God our Father,

We know we can’t always win

So for the times when we haven’t won:

Help us not to feel too sad, because we know we have tried our best;

Help us not to feel down, knowing you can pick us up and help us try again;

Help us not to be grumpy towards those that have won, but congratulate them and be glad for them;

Help us not to give up, and instead, learn how we can do better;

Help us to move forward, and not dwell miserably on what has happened.

And help us to look to the future

With determination,

Courage,

And help of you by our side.

And we make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Still on the subject of football (which no doubt we will be for some time) a couple of people asked me yesterday about shows which have a sporting theme, and there are actually one or two, although sporting games are a bit hard to portray on stage, although there are two that I have seen. The first is ‘D*** Yankees’ which concerns baseball, and an old player making a pact with the devil to become young again to play for his old team which are now failing and win the match, and also fall in love with his wife all over again. I saw the 1994 revival with Jerry Lewis, and it was great fun, and the way they made the stage into a baseball stadium was really inventive. The other is ‘The Beautiful Game’ by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Ben Elton, which was quite short lived and which I saw in London (twice) in the early 2000s, and concerned Protestant and Catholic Football teams in Northern Ireland during the troubles. It’s one of his most underrated shows (possibly cause the lyrics aren’t so great – I sometimes listen to it in German to avoid them), and was really quite powerful, with some beautiful songs. The football scenes were done well – often in slow motion, and the way football actions were turned into violence as the story went on was inspired and shocking. Here’s a montage of the Original London Cast <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IcRJE8ry7E> For Cricket fans, check out ‘Lagaan’ a four-hour Bollywood Spectacular in Hindi, the second half of which is a cricket match. Set in 1893, during the late Victorian period of India’s colonial British Raj, the plot revolves around a small village

in Central India, whose inhabitants, burdened by high taxes, and several years of drought, find themselves in an extraordinary situation as an arrogant British army officer challenges them to a game of cricket, as a wager to avoid paying the taxes they owe. The music is by the prolific genius, composer A.R. Rahman (who technically because of his extraordinary output and popularity in India is the most famous and successful composer in history). It's actually a great film and well worth a watch (and the only Bollywood film my mate Fr. Ed has ever sat through). Here's the trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZPbpymefuE> Any other suggestions?

So have a great week – and it's the World Cup next year, so let's pray that Football is Coming Home in 2022 – I've already got the Fridge Magnet ready!

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.