

Monday July 19th, 2021, Monday in the Sixteenth 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.

After a beautiful weekend, it looks like a beautiful week! Another early start: 8:30am at the Crematorium followed by 9am mass, then back to the Crem for 11am – along with our Leaver's Assembly this afternoon, so on with the day! We've got Saints and Feasts to celebrate every day this week, including the Lancashire and Cumbrian Martyrs, as well as some Saints we know well, and some not so well.

In Exodus 14:5-18 Pharaoh relented when he saw the Israelites leaving Egypt - it was a massive loss of his work-force. But already the Israelites run into difficulties, as their faith in their God was weak and they were terrified when they saw the huge army coming after them. Immediately they start grumbling at Moses that they would have been left to die in Egypt. But God was with them and would defend them, as he tells Moses, *'And when I have won glory for myself, at the expense of Pharaoh and his chariots and the army, the Egyptians will learn that I am the Lord.'*

And there is something similar happening in the Gospel, Matthew 12:38-42. The people are looking for a sign that Jesus is indeed from God - they won't accept his words or his miracles as enough, and Jesus tells them, *'It is a wicked generation that asks for a sign.'* So Jesus makes reference to the sign of Jonah, who was in the belly of the whale for three days, just as Jesus would be three days in the earth and rise up again. Together let us pray for a deeper faith in the Lord, with the Church's 'Acts of Faith, Hope and Love.

Act of Faith:

*O my God, I firmly believe
that you are one God in three divine Persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
I believe that your divine Son became man
and died for our sins and that he will come
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe these and all the truths
which the Holy Catholic Church teaches
because you have revealed them
who are eternal truth and wisdom,*

*who can neither deceive nor be deceived.
In this faith I intend to live and die. Amen.*

Act of Hope:

*O Lord God,
I hope by your grace for the pardon of all my sins
and after life here to gain eternal happiness
because you have promised it
who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful.
In this hope I intend to live and die.
Amen.*

Act of Love:

*O Lord God, I love you above all things
and I love my neighbour for your sake
because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love.
In this love I intend to live and die. Amen.*

And together let us sing 'Lord Of All Hopefulness.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCBjxVP6GWE>

Today we celebrate the Memorial of the Martyrs of Lancashire, eight martyrs from the Preston, Garstang and Fylde area who were martyred elsewhere. All the martyrs received strength from the Eucharist, and we pray for the strength to witness to our faith from that same source of Christ's living presence.

*Lord our God
May we learn through the example of the martyrs
To put our confidence in you alone
And so follow the narrow way which leads to eternal life.
And through our remembrance of their death, and the death of your Son
May we share with our holy and blessed martyrs the glory of the resurrection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

One of the martyrs we remember today was Blessed George Haydock, and I was Parish priest of the Church which bears his name in Cottam at the in the early 2000s, a picture of which I attach, after we had restored it after an arson attack on the sacristy in August 2000 (there were several attacks on Churches around Preston at the time). George Haydock lived in the area, and one of the parishioners was actually his ancestor, and had the family tree displayed in her house. It is a beautiful Church in what were beautiful surroundings just North of Preston, though which is sadly hardly recognizable due to all the houses which have built surrounding it! Last time I went there I got lost amidst all the new builds!

Let's keep Year 6 in our prayers as, following on from their Mass on Friday, this afternoon in Church they are celebrating the end of seven years at St. Bernadette's School with their families as they hold their leaving assembly.

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Peter Davies and Dorothea Evans, whose funeral services I will be celebrating at Carleton this Morning. *May they rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

And have a great start to the week!

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.