

Tuesday July 20th, 2021, Tuesday 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.

Good morning – and another scorching day ahead of us by the looks of things!

In Exodus 14:21-15 we have the very famous incident of Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea, with the Israelites crossing safely, with the pursuing Egyptians in chariots drowning, *'not a single one of them was left.'* This is followed by their great Psalm of Praise which we always sing at the Easter Vigil as this whole story is seen as a prefigurement of baptism – as the Israelites went through the waters of the red Sea to the Promised Land, so we go through the waters of baptism to the Promised Land of Heaven.

*'You will lead you people and plant them on your mountain,
The place, O Lord, where you have made your home,
The sanctuary, Lord, which your hands have made.'*

And, in a journey back to normality it was lovely to celebrate a kind of semi socially distanced baptism on Sunday afternoon!

And our lovely little Gospel, Matthew 12:46-50 is in the incident in which members of Jesus' family come to see, including his mother Mary, and are told that anyone who does the will of his Father as part of his family. Let's see this as a great invitation to be members of his family by following the will of the Father, also reminding ourselves that if we call ourselves members of God's family, we should always live our lives And let us also remember that no human being did the will of the Father more perfectly than Jesus' Mother, our blessed Mother Mary. St. Ambrose of the late fourth century definitely thought so, and he wrote this beautiful prayer/meditation on the life of Mary:

*O, that the soul of Mary were in us to glorify the Lord!
That the spirit of Mary were in us to rejoice in God.
May the life of Blessed Mary be ever present to our awareness.
In her, as in a mirror, the form of virtue and beauty of chastity shine forth.
She was virgin, not only in body, but in mind and spirit.
She never sullied the pure affection of her heart by unworthy feelings.
She was humble of heart.
She was serious in her conversations.
She was prudent in her counsels.*

*She preferred to pray rather than to speak.
She united in her heart the prayers of the poor
And avoided the uncertainty of worldly riches.
She was ever faithful to her daily duties,
Reserved in her conversations, and always accustomed to recognize God as the witness of her
thoughts.*

Blessed be the name of Jesus..

Amen.

Let us sing a hymn to our Blessed Mother, 'Holy Virgin, by God's Decree.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v4mll8Nqa0>

And today we remember St. Apollinaris. According to tradition, Saint Peter sent Apollinaris to Ravenna, Italy, as its first bishop. His preaching of the Good News was so successful that the pagans there beat him and drove him from the city. He returned, however, and was exiled a second time. After preaching in the area surrounding Ravenna, he entered the city again. After being cruelly tortured, he was put on a ship heading to Greece. Pagans there caused him to be expelled to Italy, where he went to Ravenna for a fourth time. You have to admire his determination and tenacity! He died from wounds received during a savage beating at Classis, a suburb of Ravenna. A beautiful basilica honouring him was built there in the sixth century.

*Direct your faithful, Lord,
in the way of eternal salvation,
which the Bishop Saint Apollinaris
showed by his teaching and martyrdom,
and grant, through his intercession,
that we may so persevere
in keeping your commandments
as to merit being crowned with him.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And today our school year here at St. Bernadette's concludes, as the teachers and children begin their well-deserved Summer Holiday. And what a year it has been! Let us not dwell on the difficulties and disappointments, but instead be glad and grateful that our wonderful school has been able to achieve this year, thankful for all their incredible hard work in the face of so much uncertainty and adversity.

*At the end of this school year we give thanks to God:
For all the teaching and learning that has taken place in our school,
both in and out of the classroom, at school and at home online,
For the talents and gifts that have been shared*

*and the challenges that have been faced;
For the burdens that have been lifted and the hurts that have been healed;
For the respect and care that has been given.
We give thanks for the friendships that have just begun and for those that have grown.
We thank you for our teachers, and all who work in our schools
Their teaching, and their example, that they give to our young people
For the faith that has been lived in our daily struggles,
For the hope that has lifted our hearts on the dark days
And for the love that has kept us going, and humbly thank you.
We give thanks for the community that we are now, and we ask you Lord -
Bless our students who move on to pastures new:
may our time together leave us with memories to cherish.
Bless our children who will join us in September:
May they look forward to this new stage in their lives as they are welcomed.
Bless our families as we take our holidays,
Pour out your love on us that we may return renewed and refreshed
to continue our journey together.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.*

And a huge 'Amen' to that!

No photo of this morning's sunrise, but how about this one taken last night of the beautiful sunset, blessed as we are by God's creation.

Have 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.