

Saturday July 24th, 2021, Saturday 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.

Welcome to the weekend, and our first weekend at Church with our slightly less restrictive Masses! Let's see how it goes, in the meanwhile...

Having received the Commandments, Moses gathered the people together and they made a blood sacrifice to seal the covenant with God that they would obey all those rules. After Moses has presented the people of God with the ten Commandments, they respond, *'We will observe all that the Lord has decreed; we will obey.'* Time will tell whether they hold true to the Covenant...

Another parable from Jesus reminds us that the evil and the good will live side-by-side until the day of judgment, the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds, which grow together until it is time for harvest, at which point they can be separated. It is a Parable designed to help us to understand why there is evil in this world, and its consequences. This is a rather lovely prayer of Confession based on this Parable:

Merciful God, you plant each of us like seeds in the same field and together we are nourished and nurtured by the sun. We sway in the wind and are refreshed by the rain. We are blessed by the knowledge that you want us to grow towards what you call us to be.

When we deprive others of that same opportunity, forgive us.

When we want to uproot those whom we believe do not belong in our part of the field, forgive us.

When we label others as good or bad rather than accept them for who they are, forgive us.

When we are reluctant to acknowledge that we ourselves are a mixture of weeds and wheat, forgive us.

When we are afraid to look into the fields of our own lives to see what is growing there, forgive us.

O God, you know us inside and out, through and through.

You search us out and lay your hand upon us.

You know what we are going to say even before we speak.

So we pray that you will help us to reach out to the uprooted and rejected, the lonely and the outcast,

and to develop and grow the good in ourselves, in others, and in the world.

This we pray in Jesus's name.

Amen.

Let us sing 'Amazing Grace' – a beautiful hymn to remind us of God's mercy. A big choral version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2arm5ydeJc> or here is Carrie Underwood (whom I've mentioned before) with her very laid-back solo 'Country' version;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tae3rpIvpg>

And today we remember ten martyrs who were born in the present county of Cumbria and who were all martyred elsewhere except Blessed Christopher Robinson who was born, worked, and was martyred in Carlisle. They include St. John Boste, along with Blessed John Mason, layman, Thomas Somers, James Duckett, layman, Thomas Tunstall OSB, William Ward, John Duckett, Thomas Pickering OSB, and Thomas Spratt. Today we give thanks for the witness of the martyrs which always calls us to a life of strong and generous faith.

Almighty and ever-living God

We pray that through this remembrance of our Cumbria martyrs

Their deaths may speak in our hearts,

And unite us and sustain us in that newness of life which is your gift

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And so we have our first weekend after July 19th, so I'll just re-iterate the Church guidelines for here at St. Bernadette's:

Please continue the option to wear masks whilst in the Church building, sanitize as usual, and optionally sign in for track and trace.

Social distancing is not required but please be sensitive to others, and for the time being the ropes will remain on alternate side benches.

For the time being we will continue to use mass sheets rather than books.

Communion distribution will continue as present under one kind by hand.

Singing, and other readings and various actions during mass (such as an offertory procession) etc., will be gradually reintroduced.

Please leave orderly as directed.

Everything is once again a learning curve, so watch this space as we see how things develop!

Lord, draw me closer to your Son. During his time on earth, Jesus saw people who were hungry, visited people who were sick and wept over the death of his friend Lazarus. He entered a world of illness, suffering and death, so he understands what we are going through—not only because he is divine and knows all things, but because he is human and experienced all things. As we slowly enter a new normality, teach me to be open to newness, and teach me to be thankful, Almighty God. Amen.

Let's look forward to a great weekend, as together as we possibly can be – even if some of us are trying our best to avoid direct sunlight (although the forecast suggests that this might not be too difficult...!).

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.