

Monday July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Monday in the Seventeenth 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 who knows what the week will hold, weatherwise or otherwise, but let's hope it is a good one – the first full week of the Summer Hols for many!

Ok! So, on with our Old Testament history. Last week we heard about Moses trying to form the people into the People of God with God giving him the Ten Commandments. Now, in Exodus 32:15-24.30-34 Moses comes down from the mountain and immediately finds that they have gone back to their old ways, honouring the false gods of their neighbours. They are embarrassed by their actions, and try to excuse themselves saying that they merely threw gold on the fire and the calf came out of the furnace. Moses pleads with God for their forgiveness - but not before he has punished them himself by making them drink water sprinkled with the dust made from the calf. God forgives, and the people continue their journey, with the angel of the Lord going before them.

And in Matthew 13:31-35 Jesus continues with his parables, and we have two short, lovely, Parables of the Kingdom, that of the tiny mustard seed which becomes the biggest seed of all, and the yeast which spreads throughout the life to make it rise. The kingdom of God may begin as something small and insignificant, but it will eventually have a huge influence.

*Lord, open our ears and hearts to your word and presence, that planted once more, like a seed in the ground, we may be encouraged and given new life.*

*Open our lives and the life of our church community to your word and the way of your Kingdom, that it may grow, enriched by the leaven of your word.*

*Lord, open our spirits to your Spirit of new growth as your people in the world.*

*Amen.*

A lovely version of the lovely 'Lord Of All Hopefulness' to start the day!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8mti7VL3gg>

And today, July 26<sup>th</sup>, the Church remembers St. Joachim and St. Anne, the parents of the Virgin Mary. Despite the importance of their role as the maternal grandparents of Jesus, we do not know too much about them, and as they are not mentioned in the Scriptures at all, we fall back on to tradition. Regarding Joachim, it is said that he was a shepherd from Jerusalem, married to Anne. They did not have any children, and they were a rather elderly couple when, one day, while Joachim was at work in

the fields as usual, an angel appeared to announce the birth of a child, and Anna also had the same vision. So they called their little girl Mary, which means 'loved by God,' and then they moved to Nazareth, where they educated Mary, teaching her the law of the Lord. We should remember that the very flesh that the son of God took on at his Incarnation came from his Blessed Mother, of course, which means it comes from her parents, too.

*O Holy Mother and Father of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as parents, you guided and nurtured Mary and, under your protection and love, watched her grow in holiness.*

*Through your faithfulness and goodness the will of God was fulfilled; the fruits of your virtue and faith brought salvation to the whole world with the birth of the baby Jesus.*

*Most Holy St's Anne and Joachim, come close to us and guide our hand and our hearts in the way of virtue.*

*Help us to parent our children and grandchildren with a gentle heart as you did.*

*Show us how to raise our children in faith and bring our families into the Light of Jesus.*

*Remain close to us and help us on our journey to salvation.*

*St Anne and St Joachim: Pray for us.*

Acknowledging the great role of Grandparents in our families, as well as Grandparents who, for whatever reason, are unable to see their children's children, this is Pope Benedict XVI's Prayer for Grandparents written at the request of the Catholic Grandparents Association (CGA) in 2008. There is an awful lot of depth to this prayer.

*Lord Jesus,*

*you were born of the Virgin Mary,*

*the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.*

*Look with love on grandparents the world over.*

*Protect them! They are a source of enrichment  
for families, for the Church and for all of society.*

*Support them! As they grow older,  
may they continue to be for their families*

*strong pillars of Gospel faith,*

*guardians of noble domestic ideals,*

*living treasuries of sound religious traditions.*

*Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,  
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits  
of their mature human and spiritual experience.*

*Lord Jesus,*

*help families and society*

*to value the presence and role of grandparents.*

*May they never be ignored or excluded,  
but always encounter respect and love.  
Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed  
in all the years of life which you give them.  
Mary, Mother of all the living,  
keep grandparents constantly in your care,  
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,  
and by your prayers, grant that all families  
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,  
where you await all humanity  
for the great embrace of life without end. Amen!*

And with that prayer here is a picture of my maternal grandparents, God bless them – a picture which my Gran always loved, because it was one of the very few she had of my Grandad in which he was not wearing his cap!

Enjoy this start of the week – whatever it may hold.

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.