

Tuesday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Tuesday 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.

Much of the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch concerns the formation of the first Called and Chosen people of God, and the story of Moses perhaps exemplifies this. In Exodus 33:7-11.34:5-9.28 we see Moses trying to give the people a real identity, which is symbolised by the Tent of Meeting which is to represent the presence of the one, true God within their midst. The people are able to witness Moses pleading to God on their behalf, *'Truly, they are a headstrong people, but forgive us our sins and adopt us as your heritage.'*

In Matthew 13:36-43 Jesus explains a parable he had told earlier, that of wheat and the weeds growing together: just as the weeds are to be left until the harvest, so will the evildoers be left with the virtuous until the final judgment. It helps to give the people an explanation of why good and evil co-exist in this world.

*Lord of the Harvest, be with us now as we pray. May we sow good seed by the goodness of our lives and look forward to a bountiful harvest.*

*For the eyes of faith to see both goodness and evil in the world.*

*Lord, open our eyes.*

*For prayerful discernment in difficult circumstances.*

*Lord, sensitise our minds.*

*For a focused commitment to your Word.*

*Lord, centre our hearts.*

*For patience and mercy as we trust in a future we cannot see.*

*Lord, we surrender our lives.*

*With these prayers we seek the kingdom of heaven. We make them with confidence in Jesus' name. Amen.*

And for a hymn expounding the joys of God's creation, how about 'Sing To The Mountains, Sing To The Sea.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zacE5ZIkSE>

With all this talk of wheat and weeds and gardening, it was early, but even as I opened up the Church first thing our trusty band of gardeners were already on duty, making our surroundings as beautiful as ever. Let us thank them for the ministry (and invite any other helpers to join in on Tuesday morning – just turn up, no experience necessary). And this is a beautiful prayer of blessing over our Gardens:

*Lord of Creation,  
who planted Your own garden called Eden,  
come and bless this soil  
which is to be our garden.  
All that dies becomes earth,  
and so it lives again.  
May this garden soil  
be both womb and tomb,  
a home for death and life,  
so that seeds of living things—  
of plants, of food and flowers—  
may die and resurrect  
here in our garden.  
Father, may your Son, Jesus,  
teach us, your children,  
that all things die  
to nourish life.  
May the gentle earth,  
be blessed with our love  
as we work in it.  
Make us mindful that one day  
The earth will be our final bed  
As we journey towards the heavenly garden of eternity.  
Amen*

And this is a prayer for the Gardeners to say themselves, and perhaps also for those of us without very green fingers...

*Help us, Oh God, to be ever mindful of the beauties around us. May we grow with our flowers in gentleness, patience, courage, laughter and religion.*

*As we turn the brown soil and plant our seed, may we learn faith... faith in the goodness of the earth, the clemency of the sun, the fullness of the clouds.*

*May we be grateful for the privilege of being co-workers with God in the creation of even one tiny flower;*

*And grant that we may know the great joy that comes from sharing that beauty of the earth with others.*

*Amen.*

And why not listen to the beautiful hymn by John Rutter, 'For The Beauty Of the Earth.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVQFEgT7E6c>

And finally...

My gardener talked to me about edible herbs I can grow. It was sage advice.

I stood in my garden early yesterday morning wondering where the sun had gone. Then it dawned on me.

So my neighbour sees me kneeling down, busy in my garden and asks what I'm doing. 'I'm putting all my plants in alphabetical order' 'Really?! I don't know how you find the time!' 'It's right next to the sage'.

I'll get my coat – and do some weeding...!

Here's the latest member of the gardening team, Bobby the Dog – though I'm not sure if he is much help! (Probably about as much help as me, actually).

And that all makes a rather good start to the day! Enjoy the creation around us!

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.