

Thursday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Thursday In The Twenty-Ninth Week In Ordinary Time Year II

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.

Gosh that was a bit of a storm this morning, not helped by a cat wailing seemingly right outside my bedroom window! Hey ho.

Today in Ephesians 3:14-21 St. Paul has the most wonderful prayer for his readers. May God give you the power to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, be planted and built on love. May God help you to know the breadth and length, the height and depth of his mystery, and be filled with the utter fullness of God. *'Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.'*

In Luke 12:49-53 Jesus tells the Apostles how his message, and the message they are to preach is so powerful that it may even divide families, *'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were burning already.'* Let's say a prayer for family unity:

*Everlasting Father*

*we are asking for your wisdom and your strength to handle our differences as a family*

*Help us to respect everyone's opinions and be considerate of everyone's feelings.*

*We understand that we are different in many ways*

*and we all need to compromise to maintain peace and unity.*

*Let us understand each family member's strengths and weaknesses*

*that we may not be judgmental but supportive of them in everything they do.*

*Help us to keep the peace with everyone and live a life that glorifies you.*

*Help us be flexible. Let us love each other as you loved us first.*

*Let your love be our motivation.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

And for all our families, let us ask the Lord to 'Bind Us Together.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muXncRB3Ebg>

And today we celebrate the memorial of one our best loved Popes, John Paul II. Born in Wadowice, Poland, Karol Jozef Wojtyla had lost his mother, father, and older brother before his 21st birthday. Karol's promising academic career at Krakow's Jagiellonian University was cut short by the outbreak

of World War II. While working in a quarry and a chemical factory, he enrolled in an ‘underground’ seminary in Kraków. Ordained in 1946, he was immediately sent to Rome where he earned a doctorate in theology. Back in Poland, Fr. Wojtyla earned a doctorate in philosophy and began teaching that subject at Poland’s University of Lublin. Ironically Communist officials allowed Wojtyla to be appointed auxiliary bishop of Kraków in 1958, considering him a relatively harmless intellectual. They could not have been more wrong!

Bishop Wojtyla attended all four sessions of Vatican II and contributed especially to its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Appointed as archbishop of Kraków in 1964, he was named a cardinal three years later. Elected pope in October 1978, he took the name of his short-lived, immediate predecessor, and was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years.

Known as ‘The Travelling Pope’ John Paul II made pastoral visits to 124 countries, including several with small Christian populations. He promoted ecumenical and interfaith initiatives, especially the 1986 Day of Prayer for World Peace in Assisi. He visited Rome’s main synagogue and the Western Wall in Jerusalem; he also established diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel. He improved Catholic-Muslim relations, and in 2001 visited a mosque in Damascus, Syria. His 1979 visit to Poland encouraged the growth of the Solidarity movement there and the collapse of communism in central and Eastern Europe 10 years later. John Paul II began World Youth Day and travelled to several countries for those celebrations. He very much wanted to visit China and the Soviet Union, but the governments in those countries prevented that.

In his 27 years of papal ministry, John Paul II canonized 482 saints and beatified 1,338 people, more than any Pope in history. In the last years of his life, he suffered from Parkinson’s disease and was forced to cut back on some of his activities. Pope Benedict XVI beatified John Paul II in 2011, and Pope Francis canonized him in 2014.

*O Blessed Trinity, we thank you for having graced the Church with Saint John Paul II and for allowing the tenderness of your fatherly care, the glory of the Cross of Christ and the splendour of the Spirit of love to shine through him.*

*Trusting fully in your infinite mercy and in the maternal intercession of Mary, he has given us a living image of Jesus the Good Shepherd.*

*He has shown us that holiness is the necessary measure of ordinary Christian life and is the way of achieving eternal communion with you.*

*Grant us, by his intercession, and according to your will, the graces we implore, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Pope John Paul was instrumental in promoting devotion to the Divine Mercy, and promulgating the Sunday after Easter as 'Divine Mercy Sunday'. I attach a picture of the Divine Mercy Church in Rome, along with its great icon of St. John Paul, where I concelebrated Mass a few years ago.

Do your best with the day, and I'll get ready for Thursday's NoonDay Mass.

Sunday Morning's mass was recorded and available on the YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUzVtCt6M4A&feature=youtu.be>

Texts for each day can be found at <http://universalis.com/mass.htm>

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). Any suggestions for ways to keep our faith and spirits up at this time are most welcome!

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.