

Friday September 25<sup>th</sup>, Friday in the Twenty-Fifth 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.

And so we reach the end of another week – they really are flying by, and yet there is still a quietness caused by this wretched disease and its restrictions. Hopefully we are all getting through, physically and mentally – and helping others to get through it all, too, especially with further restrictions.

In our first reading today we continue with the book of Ecclesiastes, or Qoheleth 3:1-11 with an extract that has been made familiar from the sixties song 'Turn, Turn, Turn.'

*'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

*A time to be born, and a time to die;*

*a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted...*

*a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing...'*

Isn't it strange how Scripture always keeps up to date, as we sadly find ourselves in a time to refrain from embracing. Hopefully it won't be too long before we can give each other a true sign of love and peace again. It's a passage I often use at funeral service, because it speaks of all things mortal, including there being 'a time to die' which, for those with faith, means a time to live again, in the joy of eternal life, of which death has no part.

And today we have a hugely important turning point in the Gospel Luke 9:18-22. The apostles are now given their chance to say who Jesus is. He is not Elijah or John the Baptist, but, as Peter says, 'the Christ of God.' Finally, the Apostles make their profession of faith in Jesus – and there are immediate consequences, with Peter being made the future head of the Church, and the journey to Jerusalem and the Passion and Death of Christ to be contended with, something the Apostles had most definitely not been expecting.

For the children's prayer video this morning I sent a child friendly version of this prayer which I found:

*Father, thank You for this Friday. Thank You for seeing us through another work week and bringing us to the weekend. Father, we pray that this weekend will be filled with rest, refreshment, and quiet time with You. Our lives can seem so overwhelming and confusing, but we know that You are there by our side always.*

*Holy Spirit, please wash us with Your love. We repent of our sins, and we pray for help to do better in time. We rejoice that You are forgiving and full of such a grace that ushers us forth into freedom. Our times and our days rest in Your hands, and we know that even in anguish, You have a plan for our benefit and the glorification of the kingdom. Help us to trust You in such times and be filled with overwhelming peace.*

*Thank You, Lord, for this beautiful day. May we increase in You, may we come into an abundance of Your love. Amen.*

Let's sing a great hymn of praise for this lovely day, 'Praise To the Lord, The Almighty The King of Creation' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCnQNwQG5GI>

Our Saint today is Saint Sergius, one of the foremost Russian saints and mystics. Born to a noble family near Rostov, at the age of fifteen, he fled with his family to Radonezh, near Moscow, to escape a campaign by the rulers of Moscow. As their wealth was all but wiped out, the family became peasant farmers until 1335 when, after the death of his parents, he and his brother Stephen became hermits at Makovka. Sergius became well-known as a profoundly spiritual figure in the Russian wilderness, eventual organizing his followers into a community that became the famed Holy Trinity Monastery. Serving as abbot, he restored monastic traditions which had been destroyed. Increasingly respected, even by the Royal Family, Sergius sought to promote peace among the ever-feuding Russian princes, as well as founding many monasteries – over forty, in fact. He died on September 25<sup>th</sup> 1378 and canonized in 1449. He is Patron of Russia.

*O God,*

*whose blessed Son became poor that we, through his poverty, might be rich:*

*Deliver us from an inordinate love of this world,*

*that we, inspired by the devotion of your servant Sergius,*

*may serve you with singleness of heart,*

*and attain to the riches of the age to come;*

*through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,*

*one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

I had the privilege of visiting St. Petersburg a couple of years ago along with my Australian family. Russia was far from what I expected. For some reason I thought there would a lot of post war 1960's communist type building – and perhaps there were in the suburbs. But the centre of St. Petersburg is probably one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited, with stunning palaces, incredible Churches, and a wonderful river winding through, on which we had a night time boat trip in the rain (with a tippie of vodka), with the lights of buildings reflecting magically in the water – here's one of the pics.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Veronica Whitehead, whose funeral I will be celebrating at Carleton at 12:30pm this afternoon. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

Whatever you manage to get up to today, I hope you have a happy Friday. And as the Friday penance is lifted during lockdown maybe it's time for a meat-feast pizza, as long as I'm finished by 10pm. Enjoy!

Mass on Saturday evening was recorded and is on the YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqqVJRJzufA&feature=youtu.be>  
Texts for mass 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, though the building is, most of the time. 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.