

Saturday September 26<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 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.

Quite a sanguine warning for us in Ecclesiastes, or Qoheleth 11:9-12:8 today. Time marches on for us all. We are young for a while, but all is vanity. The day will come when all will be silenced and we will go to our everlasting home. God gave breath, God takes it away. Make good use of it while we still have it. Again, '*Vanity of vanities, the Preacher says. All is vanity.*' Oooh er...!

Yesterday we saw the Apostles, through Peter, make their act of faith in Jesus, the Christ. But in Luke 9:43-45 They find it difficult to accept that their hero should suffer as Jesus makes his first prophecy of his Passion to the disciples, telling them that he was going to suffer and die, and handed over to the power of man. This was not in line with any thinking they had about who the Messiah was and what he was going to do; '*But they did not understand him... and they were afraid to ask him what he had just said.*' In order to reach the resurrection, we have to journey through the cross – something which the disciples would only come to fully understand much later.

*Heavenly Father, I praise and thank You for the glorious victory Christ gained through His death, burial and resurrection, banishing death forever in the lives of all who believe in Him.*

*Father, I acknowledge that the victory is Christ's alone but thanks be to God, that by Your great grace You have given us that same wonderful victory, through our Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*I pray that I will run the race that is set before me looking to Jesus, and that I may finish the course that You have given to me, as I yield through word and deed to the working of the Holy Spirit within.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Grateful that we can come together to receive Holy Communion, let us sing 'O Bread of Heaven, beneath This Veil.' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-cBBzXfP3g>

And today we celebrate the memorial of Saints Cosmas and Damian who were brothers, possibly twins, born in Arabia, probably sometime early in the third century, who had become eminent for their skill in the science of medicine, both being doctors. Being Christians, they were filled with the spirit of charity and never took money for their services, they were known as the 'silverless ones.' At Egaea in Cilicia, where they lived, they enjoyed the highest esteem of the people, and brought many

of their patients to the faith. When the persecution under Diocletian broke out, their very prominence rendered them marked objects of persecution. Being apprehended by order of Lysias, governor of Cilicia, they underwent various torments about the year 283 in Syria. They are patron saints of pharmacists. There is an ancient basilica in Rome dedicated to them – an amazing building built on three levels going underground, which dates back to the sixth century. It's near the Colosseum, and well worth a visit if we ever find ourselves able to visit Rome.

*Oh glorious martyrs of Christ,  
Saints Cosmas and Damian,  
you gave your lives for the love of God,  
benefiting your fellow man,  
and crowning your martyrdom with an open and loyal profession of your faith.  
You taught us to love God above all things,  
and to love our fellow man as ourselves,  
professing always,  
and without fear,  
the religion of Jesus.  
Augmenting amongst the faithful populace many miracles,  
you are glorious indeed.  
Through your intercession,  
which brings about deliverance of these miracles,  
we pray to you for your aid in all things.  
May your patronage never be far from us in the illness of our body and soul.  
Oh great protectors,  
Saints Cosmas & Damian,  
assist us with your love and free us from all evils.  
Amen.*

Despite even more lockdown restrictions for Blackpool (people from two houses can't meet?) we are still allowed to continue our public masses with our present covid restrictions, though please do not congregate in groups of more than six people around the Church grounds. Funerals in Church are limited to thirty people, Weddings to fifteen people, and baptisms to only six people, apparently (although I'm questioning that). At present numbers at Carleton Crematorium remain at 18 people in the chapel, and 10 people at Lytham. **But the public masses continue on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday as presently normal.** If you have downloaded the track and trace app for your phone, the Church, at the insistence of the Bishop, now has its own QR code, which can be scanned in at the Church door. Who would ever, *ever* have thought it.

News from Down Under, and over in Australia they are just moving into the season of Spring, but I received an email from my sister yesterday saying; 'We've got real snow!!! Never seen this before. On top of Mount Buninyong, yes, but not here. Kids not seen this heavy snow in their memory. Still coming!' And as you can see from the attached pics, it certainly is quite a snowstorm! (And a quote from last night's 'Bake Off': 'In Australia, do they call 'upside down cake' just 'cake'?)

I attach the bulletin and bidding prayers, and tonight's mass will be recorded and the YouTube link will be on tomorrow's message.

Hope you are able to make the most of the weekend!

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.