

Monday September 28th, Monday in the Twenty-Sixth 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.

Lovely to see lot of faces – new and old – at our weekend Masses, and looking forward to our masses on Tuesday and Thursday as well.

All this week we listen to a summary of the Book of Job. It is a very famous poem and tries to deal with the huge problem of human suffering. Why does God allow a good person to suffer? What part has suffering to play in the life of a person? Today we have a piece from the prologue, Job 1:6-22, which tells us that Job was a pious and blameless man, who was perfectly happy and contented. Satan insinuates himself among the angels of God's court and argues that Job's virtue is not genuine. So God allows Satan to test his virtue - but not to touch Job himself. As a result Job lost everything. But Job is quite calm about his sorry situation, and never loses his faith in God,

*'Naked I came from my mother's womb,
naked I shall return.*

The Lord gave, the Lord has taken back.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

We ended last week's readings with the Apostles finally announcing that they believe Jesus to be the Christ, although they do not understand the need of his suffering and passion. Moving on from this they then start an argument with themselves about which was the greatest. Lk 9:46-50 neatly follows on from the weekend readings about humility when Jesus tells us that *'Anyone who welcomes this little child welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me.'* We are also reminded by Jesus in this Gospel that *'Anyone who is not against you is for you.'* Something to ponder on in these strange times.

*Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

For a hymn today let's cheer ourselves up if we are feeling down with a nice jolly version of 'Lord of The Dance,' complete with a chorus of whistlers for an introduction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkk0YodJqH8>

And today we celebrate the memorial of Good King Wenceslaus – yes, he of the Christmas Carol fame. The Christmas carol beautifully relates his kindness to a peasant on the Feast of St. Stephen, but Wenceslaus' story is much more than that – and not a jolly story either. He was born around the year 907 in Bohemia, which later became Czechoslovakia, and currently Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Although the Christmas carol refers to Wenceslaus as 'King' he was actually the Duke of Bohemia. Saints Cyril and Methodius helped convert his family to Catholicism, but paganism still plagued most of the country of Bohemia, including his mother, who was baptized on her wedding day but not a faithful Christian. His grandmother, St. Ludmilla, taught Wenceslaus his faith. His mother believed she would gain more power having Wenceslaus renounce his Christianity but he refused. She killed her mother-in-law to try to help her cause, but Wenceslaus stayed true to Catholicism, and his grandmother Ludmilla died a martyr for her faith. Later younger brother Boleslav violently killed Wenceslaus at the door of a church, Wenceslaus' last words being 'Brother, may God forgive you.' There is a happy ending, as Boleslav repented and converted and followed in Wenceslaus' footsteps (just as the page did in the Christmas carol) to bring his country to the fullness of Christianity. Ludmilla and Wenceslaus did not die in vain. And these are two saints to invoke when grandparents are helping raise their grandchildren, particularly in the Faith. St. Wenceslaus is also the Patron Saint of Bohemia and parts of the Czech Republic. Indeed the huge town square (or boulevard) in Prague is named after him, and has been the scene of many religious and political rallies over the years. And it might be fitting to raise a glass to him, as he also the Patron Saint of Brewers!

St. Wenceslaus,

thou wert an intelligent and peaceable ruler, pious and forgiving of wrongs.

Pray for all our leaders today, that they may be compassionate and kind, shrewd but noble, and that they may follow the morality of the Christian religion.

St. Wenceslaus, thou wert declared a martyr and a saint immediately upon thine death.

Pray for all persecuted Christians, that they may persevere in the faith until their death.

St. Wenceslaus, thou now reign with Christ forever in heaven.

Please intercede for us in the matters we bring before thee this day.

Amen.

And it's not yet Christmas, but how about singing along with, of course, 'Good King Wenceslaus' in a posh choral version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQVUMG6LZGM> or a bouncy children's version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X69M519dycQ>

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Andrea Louise Bourn, whose funeral I will be celebrating at Carleton this morning at 10:30am. *May perpetual light shine upon her.*

Meanwhile, in other news, I was FaceTiming with my brother the other day, before being rudely ‘photobombed’ by Tobias, the Presbytery Cat! Never one to knowingly not get in on the act!

I hope you all have a jolly start to the week.

Saturday evening’s mass was recorded, and is available for the week on the YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdHv0p8amIk&feature=youtu.be>

with texts being available 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.