

Thursday October 29th, Thursday In The Thirtieth 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.

It's a very dark morning, but there was good news on GMTV this morning informing us that as Father Christmas is a key worker his duties will carry on as usual, and the Chief Medical Officer for Ireland (seriously) pointed out that although Father Christmas would be considered clinically obese, and therefore in a high risk category for covid and diabetes, the speed at which he travels means that he would not be putting himself at any risk. Phew.

Today we conclude our reading of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. In Ephesians 6:10-20 we can imagine Paul in prison, guarded by a soldier, complete with armour. And just as Christ often used his surroundings in parables and teaching, so Paul describes the Christian as having the spiritual armour of truth and righteousness, ready to preach the gospel, with the shield of faith and the Spirit like a sword. Above all, pray, pray, pray. *'Pray all the time, asking for what you need... never get tired of staying awake to pray.'*

In today's Gospel we see the great sadness of Jesus when Jerusalem, the city he is so proud of, keeps its ears closed to his teaching in Luke 13:31-35, with the Pharisees encouraging Jesus to leave as Herod wishes to kill him. However the Gospel continues hopefully, as Jesus prefigures the cries of the people when he enters Jerusalem, *'Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord.'* which itself comes from Psalm 118:

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

I called on the Lord in distress; The Lord answered me and set me free.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

The Lord is for me among those who help me;

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This was the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.

You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever

So today, let's not wait till Remembrance Sunday and sing 'Jerusalem', which is such a great hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ebtI8vbYFQ>

and I attach another one of the pictures that I took whilst in Jerusalem a few years ago. Here I am at the 'Wailing Wall' complete with the compulsory yarmulke (the skull cap).

If you want a Saint today, in Ireland they are celebrating the Bishop Saint Colman. He was born around 550AD in Corker in Kiltartan, and led the life of a hermit in hills of County Clare. He then became Abbot and Bishop of Kilmacduagh, an Abbey in County Galway. He was most definitely the Saint Francis of Assisi of Ireland, as he is said to have had a great affinity with animals. Apparently a cockerel would alert him when it was time to say his prayers, a mouse would keep him awake making sure he didn't drop off during them, and fly would always mark his page in his breviary (which sounds to me like an accident waiting to happen).

*Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who established your dwelling
in the heart of your Bishop Saint Colman,
and through solitude and contemplation
made him strong in your love;
form us, we pray, in the spirit of penance and prayer
so that we, too, may love by your divine life.
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Saint Colman obviously had great support of his animals, and I guess many of us felt the same support and companionship of our pets throughout the whole of this covid business, and, as you know, Tobias has been a great support and help in so many different ways over the last few months. This is a rather beautiful prayer of thanksgiving for all our faithful friends:

*God, our Creator, we ask you to bless our pets with Your light and love.
May our animal friends have good health, happy lives and always be protected and safe.
We ask for better understanding as we learn from our animal friends' wisdom,
their innocence, their loyalty
and particularly their seeming ability to not judge human beings unkindly.
Thank you for their companionship and friendship
especially for those lonely hours we may have experienced.
Thank you for our companions' natural ability to teach us to be aware of the present moment.
Thank you for the pure beauty of every animal,
their form, colour, texture, motion is all a work of art,
and may we appreciate Your creation of this masterpiece.*

*Bless all animals in harm's way, heal the sick,
protect those who are lost, and guide them to safety.
Thank you for the gift of love. Amen*

Amen indeed. Have a lovely day, be it busy or calm. And at least try to be calm in in your busyness.

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

https://youtu.be/Fvt_cY0-87o

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.