

Tuesday September 30th, Tuesday 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.

Well the month of September is leaving us wet and miserable, but hopefully we can all try and make the best of the day. As it's so miserable outside, let's cheer ourselves by singing 'Sing It In The Valleys' which can't help to raise a smile <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bbmYOccWnk>

Maybe it is a day to ring someone who you haven't spoken to for a while?

Well, after our lovely Feast with the Archangels yesterday, we go back to the Book of Job, who despite all his troubles is still being very patient. In Job 9:1-12,14-16 three of Job's friends come to try to sort out his problems - to fix them for him. They consider suffering to be a punishment for sin, so they tell him to '*humbly recognise the faults and beg God's forgiveness*'. Job knows he is not completely sinless, but he also realises that the suffering is far greater than his faults deserve. He is looking for someone who would plead his cause before God - just as Jesus more than pleads our cause, in fact, taking our sins upon himself.

In the Gospel, Luke 9:57-62, a variety of people wished to become followers of Jesus, but sadly Jesus notes that the people are not truly committed, or aware of what following him will entail. '*If you place your hand on the plough and look back, you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven.*' Let us pray for increased commitment to God and the teachings of his Church. This is something that at present, especially with rules such as obligation being lifted, we may be in danger of losing. Let us pray that one day all ages will be filling our pews once again, singing and signing our hymns, and beautifully celebrating our Sacraments.

Lord Jesus ,

I pray that I may be solely and wholly committed to my walk with you all the days of my life.

I pray that I may be wholly contented with my life with you for the rest of my life.

I pray that I may not turn away from the path of righteousness for your namesake.

I pray that my life is worthy of following you.

Lord, I seek he gift of commitment.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

And today is the memorial of one of the Doctors of the Church, and one of its most eminent Biblical Scholars St. Jerome. Jerome was born about 342, he studied in Rome, where he was baptised. He lived for some years as a hermit in the Syrian desert, then returned to Antioch and was ordained priest by Paulinus. He lived in Constantinople and then in Rome, preaching asceticism, and studying. Eventually he settled in Bethlehem, where he was head of the monastery and devoted himself to study. Rumour has it that he was quite a grumpy so and so! His scholarship, however, was unparalleled in the early Church. He translated the Bible from its original tongues into Latin (the Vulgate), something which had never been done before, opening the Scriptures to far more people, and to study. He wrote biblical commentaries, and many other works – indeed the Biblical Commentary that every student of the priesthood knows very well indeed is called after him (I showed it to the children in their prayer video this morning – I attach a still from the video. He’s certainly rocking the hipster beardy guy look). He fought against the heresies of Arianism (which said that Jesus was a creation of the Father and not one with him), Pelagianism (which said that Original Sin didn’t exist and that humans can achieve perfection without any help from God) and Origenism (from a man called Origen who had a strange way of looking at the Scriptures, though he did write some good stuff too). St. Jerome is Patron Saint of translators, of course, as well as librarians and encyclopaedists. This is a lovely, very Scriptural, prayer of St. Jerome:

*O Lord, show Your mercy to me
and gladden my heart.
I am like the man on the way to Jericho
who was overtaken by robbers,
wounded and left for dead.
O Good Samaritan, come to my aid.
I am like the sheep that went astray.
O Good Shepherd, seek me out
and bring me home in accord with Your will.
Let me dwell in Your house all the days of my life
and praise You forever and ever with those who are there.
Amen.*

Following on from yesterday’s mention of the song ‘Jealous of the Angels’, a parishioner coming into Church for Mass yesterday directed me to an annual list, compiled by the Co-Op Funeral Services, of the most popular songs played at Crematoriums in England every year. Here’s the top ten:

1. My Way (Frank Sinatra)
2. Time To Say Goodbye (Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman)
3. Over the Rainbow (Eva Cassidy – even though she doesn’t seem to know the real tune)
4. Wind Beneath My Wings (Bette Midler)

5. Angels (Robbie Williams)
6. Supermarket Flowers (Ed Sheeran – I mentioned this has gained popularity very quickly)
7. Unforgettable (Nat King Cole – I once met his brother, Freddie, in a Jazz Club in Rome)
8. You Raise Me Up (Westlife)
9. We'll Meet Again (Vera Lynn)
10. Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life (Eric Idle, from 'Life of Brian')

Apparently the 'Game of Thrones' theme song may make it into future funeral charts, as 1 in 20 UK adults apparently voted it as a song they would consider for their own funeral. I think I'll stick with 'Abide With Me' thank you very much.

Make the most of this last day of September, and dig out your Rosary for the month of the Holy Rosary beginning tomorrow.

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.