

Friday October 30th, Friday 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.

And it's Friday already!

Having concluded St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians yesterday, we now move on to his lovely Letter to the Philippians. Philippi was a city in Macedonia, just to the north-east of present-day Greece. It was founded by Alexander the Great. Paul's visit to this town took place during his second missionary journey - the details are in the Acts Chapter 16. He had to leave after a storm of persecution and illegal imprisonment. He wrote the letter from Rome while in prison. The opening, which we have today, Philippians 1:1-11 sets the tone of the letter - the letter of a friend to a friend. He was very close to these people. Grace and peace are his wish for his friends, and he is full of Christian joy for them. May you never stop improving your knowledge, so that you can become pure and blameless. The beautiful Psalm 110 follows:

*I will thank the Lord with all my heart
in the meeting of the just and their assembly.*

*Great are the works of the Lord,
to be pondered by all who love them.*

*Majestic and glorious his work,
his justice stands firm for ever.*

He makes us remember his wonders.

The Lord is compassion and love.

*He gives food to those who fear him;
keeps his covenant ever in mind.*

*He has shown his might to his people
by giving them the lands of the nations.*

So for today's hymn let's sing 'How Great Thou Art.'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdE_NKyY_o0

For the second time this week in Luke 14:1-6 we have the account of Jesus healing someone on the Sabbath. The Pharisees watch him closely, but when he tackles them and asks, 'Which of you here, if his son falls into a well, or his ox, will not pull him out on a Sabbath day without hesitation?' they have no argument back and remain silent.

*Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the world
You bless it. You crown it with glory. You call it holy.
You created the Sabbath for each one of us
Through it, You call us out of darkness into Your love and light.
It is to be a day of refreshment and celebration.
It is a day of devotion and delight. Set apart since the beginning of time,
You alone release us from the bondage of duty and demand.
As Your chosen people, we will embrace this day of Sabbath Rest.
In keeping it, we remember You as our Creator and Redeemer.
We do this now, with joy. Amen.*

As I celebrate four Sunday Masses throughout the week, perhaps it is a lovely prayer that we could see whenever we need to take some quiet time with our Lord.

Talking of quiet time and silence, throughout Mass you'll sometimes hear me chuntering quietly, which is sometimes picked up on the microphone. These are actually little prayers and there are four of them sprinkled throughout the Mass. The first takes place before I proclaim the Gospel:

*Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God,
that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.*

The next prayer is said as I am having my hands washed:

*Wash me. O Lord, from my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*

Just before I receive Holy Communion, I make my private preparation:

*May the receiving of your Body and Blood,
Lord Jesus Christ,
not bring me to judgement and condemnation,
but through your loving mercy
be for me protection in mind and body
and a healing remedy.*

And finally, as I am cleaning, purifying, the chalice and the paten, I pray.

*What has passed our lips as food, O Lord,
may we possess in purity of heart,
that what has been given to us in time
may be our healing for eternity.*

So there you go, four little private prayers, which are beautiful enough to be prayed aloud.

Tomorrow throughout the UK there is National Rosary Rally, where the rosary will be prayed all over the country from morning until evening, and we are all being encouraged to participate online.

Ladyewell Shrine and Fernyhalgh will represent Lancaster Diocese and will lead the national prayer from 5pm to 6pm on 31st of October. Here's the link to follow:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-8ZE7-zRDvJrupuribPbig>

Meanwhile, Tobias the Presbytery Cat has been complaining that he hasn't been on The Message for a while. So here he is – with two cartons of soap which he will be donating to StreetLife.

Have a lovely Friday, and make time for a little prayer, even if it is not the Sabbath, yet.

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.