

Tuesday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tuesday in the Ninth Week in Ordinary Time Year Two

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the advice from the government and the medics about what we should be doing in this time of crisis.

And I hope everyone is praying together for our all our intentions in this time of need.

And another beautiful day! Make the most of it – rain is forecast tomorrow morning!

The Church's year continues now in Ordinary Time, so called because the weeks are ordered by number. In today's Gospel, Mark 12:13-17, Jesus is challenged about whether or not he should pay taxes. Jesus' well known reply is, of course, '*Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.*' It's a reminder of our civic duties, and how as Christians we should hold the highest of standards, but always remembering our first duty is to God. As St. Thomas More put it, in his last words as he ascended the scaffold to be beheaded for refusing to accept the supremacy of Henry VIII, '*May I be the King's good servant, but God's first.*'

*Lord,  
May I do what is needed, with courage and skill,  
be a loyal ally to my God and my country.  
Bless me this day and keep me safe from harm,  
diminish my fears, grow my courage, heal my spirit.  
Bless me as I do my duty today, the best I can,  
strengthen me in my mind, body and spirit,  
help me to respect my fellow human beings.  
Bless and protect me this day in all I must do.  
Though the same Christ, our Lord. Amen*

Today we remember Saints Marcellinus and Peter. Though we know very little about these two martyrs during the time of the Emperor Diocletian, there is no question that the early church venerated them. Evidence of the respect in which they were held are the basilica which the Emperor Constantine built over their tombs and the presence of their names in the first Eucharistic prayer. Pope St. Damasus says that he heard the story of these two martyrs from their executioner who became a Christian after their deaths. Marcellinus, a Priest, and Peter, an Exorcist, died in the year 304. According to a legendary account of their martyrdom, the two Romans saw their imprisonment as just one more opportunity to evangelize and managed to convert their jailer and his family. The legend

also says that they were beheaded in the forest so that other Christians wouldn't have a chance to bury and venerate their bodies. The two saints happily cleared the spot chosen for their death: a thicket overgrown with thorns, brambles, and briars three miles from Rome. Fortunately, two women found the bodies and had them properly buried. The bodies of Marcellinus and Peter were moved at several points through the ages, and ended up in a monastery in Germany, apparently. Their saintly names are invoked for those facing persecution and intimidation of any kind, via words, or arms, or threats.

*Saints Marcellinus and Peter, you both worked many miracles after your deaths and solidly established yourselves as important martyrs in the early Church. We continue to plead for your intercessions in all our needs, especially in this time of pandemic.*

*Saints Marcellinus and Peter, you were both courageous and brave in the face of death; pray that we may have such courage when the time comes for our mortal life to end and eternal life to begin.*

*Saints Marcellinus and Peter, you are the seeds of the Church that have allowed it to flourish and grow; continue to pray that She may be a beacon of hope to all the world. Amen.*

The name Marcellinus reminded me of the old Spanish story of Marcelino ‘Pane e Vino’, Marcelino of the Bread and Wine. The story revolves around Marcelino, an orphan abandoned as a baby on the steps of a monastery in nineteenth-century Spain. The monks raise the child, and Marcelino grows into a rowdy young boy. At a festival, Marcelino causes havoc when he accidentally lets some animals loose, and the new local mayor, a blacksmith whom the monks would not let adopt Marcelino because of his coarse behaviour, uses the incident as an excuse to try to shut down the monastery. Given the silent treatment by the monks, the lonely Marcelino slinks up to the attic, where he sees a beautiful statue of Christ on the Cross. Remarking that the statue looks hungry, Marcelino steals some bread and wine and offers it to the statue, which comes to life, descends from the Cross, and eats and drinks what the boy has brought him. The statue becomes Marcelino’s best friend and confidant. The monks know something is strange when they notice bread and wine disappearing, and arrange to spy on Marcelino. One day, the statue notices that Marcelino is pensive and brooding instead of happy, and tells him that he would like to reward his kindness. Marcelino answers, ‘I want to see my mother.’ The statue cradles Marcelino in its arms, tells Marcelino to sleep – and Marcelino dies happy. The monks witness the miracle through a crack in the attic door, and burst in just in time to see the dead Marcelino bathed in a heavenly glow. The statue returns to its place on the Cross, and Marcelino is buried underneath the chapel and venerated by all who visit the now flourishing monastery-turned-shrine. It was made into a beautiful film, and is a sure fire tear-jerker. You may find clips of it on the YouTube.

The Miraculous Medals proved very popular, so I have replenished the bowl if you would like to take some, and the Holy Spirit prayer cards are there, which depict the Holy Spirit window in St. Peter’s

Rome, which you are welcome to take for yourself, and friends and family. And there are several bottles of Holy Water again if anyone would like to take one.

Calling all our young people! Cadbury's Cream Eggs are now in the porch, sheltered from the sun opposite the R.I.P. board, and you are all welcome to take one. Don't forget, to take an egg, you have to place a picture of Tobias on the noticeboard above the basket of eggs. Put your name on it and there will be a prize for the one Tobias thinks is the best. The result will be announced next Sunday!

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Caroline Sinclair, whose funeral I will be celebrating at Lytham Cemetery at 1:15 this afternoon. *May she rest in the peace and love of Christ.*

In other news, Tobias, the Presbytery Cat, is not the only feline who owns a priest. My mate Philip, a Priest in Brentwood Diocese, is also owned by a cat called Pip – who likes to make use of the offertory collecting basket, as you can see in the attached pic...

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost. 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; 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.

P.S. Don't forget to sign <https://citizengo.org/en-gb/rf/179408-open-our-churches-and-restore-worship>