

Saturday July 4th, Saturday in Week Thirteen in Ordinary Time Year II

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.

Today's Gospel reading Matthew 9:9-13 gives us the call of St. Matthew himself. *'As Jesus was walking on he saw a man named Matthew sitting by the customs house, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.'* It's as simple as that! I always say that I think Matthew was looking for some way out of his life as tax collector. Perhaps he had realised that the money he earned and stole was not buying him happiness, and as soon as he heard the call of Jesus, who he would have presumed wanted nothing to do with him, immediately got up and responded becoming a chosen Apostle. After the Ascension it is said he travelled to Ethiopia and Persia, where he was martyred – a whole life, death and eternal life in response to the call of the Lord. Let us pray that we may respond to God's calling with the alacrity of Matthew:

*Jesus,
I am humbled that You consider me worthy to be used
in ways big and small
to accomplish Your will here on earth.
Help me respond without hesitation
whenever I perceive Your voice calling me into action.
In Your powerful and life giving Name, I pray.
Amen.*

I guess we had better sing 'Follow Me, Follow Me.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3JD9WPpqLo>

And today is the Memorial of St. Elizabeth of Portugal. Elizabeth was a Spanish princess who was given in marriage to King Denis of Portugal at the age of twelve. She was very beautiful and very lovable, and also very devout, and went to Mass every day. Elizabeth was a good wife, but although her husband was fond of her at first, he soon began to cause her great suffering. Later, to make matters worse, the King believed a lie told about Elizabeth and one of her pages by another page, who was jealous of his companion. In great anger the King ordered the one he believed guilty, to be sent to a lime-burner. The lime-burner was commanded to throw into his furnace the first page who came. The good page set out obediently, not knowing death was waiting for him. On his way he stopped for Mass, since he had the habit of going daily. The first Mass had begun, so he stayed for a second one. In the meantime, the King sent the wicked page to the lime-burner to find out if the other had been

killed. And so it was this page who was thrown into the furnace. When the King learned what had happened, he realized that God had saved the good page, punished the liar, and proven Queen Elizabeth to be innocent. This amazing event helped greatly to make the King live better. He apologized to his wife in front of everyone and began to have a great respect for her. In his last sickness, she never left his side, except for Mass, until he died a holy death. St. Elizabeth lived for eleven more years, doing even greater charity and penance. She was a wonderful model of kindness toward the poor and a successful peacemaker between members of her own family and between nations.

*O God, author of peace and lover of charity,
who adorned St. Elizabeth of Portugal with a marvellous grace
for reconciling those in conflict,
grant, through her intercession,
that we may become peacemakers,
and so be called children of God.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

And so finally after nearly four months we will be having the first of our public masses this week, **Five o'clock on Saturday afternoon, Ten o'clock on Sunday morning**, and noon on Tuesday and Thursday. **Church will be open twenty minutes before Mass.** Please think about coming along to one of these masses, remembering that Tuesday at noon has been designated as a mass for those more elderly and vulnerable, at which I will minister communion to people in their seats, while masked up. I'm afraid as I outlined yesterday there are strict rules to follow.

Please sanitise your hands as you enter.

Please give your name and phone number to the stewards.

Go to the marked seat that is nearest to the altar so we fill up from the front.

Single use mass sheets will be provided.

For communion please follow the directive of the stewards, coming forward one at a time,
and returning to your seat, before the next person comes forward.

After Mass, please leave, one by one, from the back first, sanitizing your hands, and taking home or throwing in the bin your mass sheet.

If you wish to light a candle do so as soon as you enter the Church and not as you leave making sure there is no alcohol on your hands.

Please do not congregate around the entrance either before or after mass.

It's going to be a bit of an experiment, but we'll see how it goes. Please be patient.

As yet we are not having a book-in system or ticketed masses, but that may be necessary. No provisions for the Sacrament of Reconciliation are being made as yet, so you are asked to make the Act of Perfect Contrition. The dispensation from Sunday obligation still holds. And please do not come along if you showing any signs of Covid whatsoever. Private Prayer times will not be available this week as we concentrate on trying to provide masses.

I'll let you know how the first two masses go tomorrow.

Mass will be recorded this evening at 5pm in Church (with a congregation, yey!) and I'll send the YouTube link in tomorrow's message.

The Newsletter and Bidding Prayers are attached, and you can find this Sundays readings at <https://catholicreadings.org/fourteenth-sunday-in-ordinary-time-year-a/>

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.