

Wednesday July 15th, Wednesday in the Fifteenth Week 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.

More history from Isaiah this morning, but in a very beautiful poetical way Isaiah 10:5-7. Pagan Assyria was the rod with which the Lord chastised Israel. However, Assyria went too far and destroyed the country, and the king of Assyria believed that everything was done through his power

*'Does the axe claim more credit than the man who wields it,
or the saw more strength than the man who handles it?
It would be like the cudgel controlling the man who raises it,
or the club moving what is not made of wood?'*

For their disobedience and pride this kingdom too would be destroyed. All this took place after the destruction of Israel, when those in Jerusalem were afraid that the same fate would befall them. It's all very 'Old Testament'

A lovely Gospel, which I'll quote in full, from Matthew 11:25-27;

'Jesus exclaimed, "I bless you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father, just as no one knows the Father, except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."'

I love it that Jesus 'exclaims.' He's so passionate that we should come to have knowledge of the Godhead, or rather, he is passionate for us to know God if we have the humility to consider ourselves God's children, rather than 'the learned and the clever,' who presume to know all. Humility has to be one of the watchwords of our faith. It's at the heart of the Lord's Prayer, where we praise God, acknowledge our physical and material needs, and seek his forgiveness. All this God has made known to us, and Jesus shares his joy with us because of that. Let thank God for choosing us and pray that we live up to his calling.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for allowing us to know you.
Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives,
thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us.
Thank you that you are able to bring hope through even the toughest of times,
strengthening us for your purposes.*

Thank you for your great love and care.

Thank you for your mercy and grace.

Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us.

Thank you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life.

Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough,

for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given.

Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh.

Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy.

We love you and we need you, this day and every day.

Thank you, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

So what else could we sing this morning other than 'Now Thank We All Our God.'

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

The clip is introduced by an all grown up Aled Jones, who I'm sure you remember from his 'Walking In the Air' days, though a handy fact of Trivia is that he did not sing the song in the film 'The Snowman', it was sung by a boy soprano called Peter Auty. There you go.

Today we are recalling Saint Bonaventure on his memorial, a Bishop and doctor of the Church. Bonaventure was born near Viterbo, about an hour north of Rome, in 1221, and became a member of the Friars Minor, the Franciscans. He studied in Paris, and eventually taught there, becoming known as the 'Seraphic Doctor.' He received his degree with St Thomas Aquinas, with whom he was great friends. In 1265 for some reason he was chosen to be Archbishop of York, but was never consecrated and returned to Italy, to carry on his work as successor of St Francis of Assisi, and managed to sort out serious disputes within the Franciscan order. He preached with great energy and wrote many books on Catholic doctrine. Later he was appointed bishop of Albano (near the English College Villa). He died on this day in 1274.

Grant, we pray, Almighty God,

that, just as we celebrate the heavenly birthday

of the Bishop Saint Bonaventure,

we may benefit from his great learning

and constantly imitate the ardour of his charity.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

When I was in Rome Viterbo was a nice place to go on a free weekend. We could stay for free in the monastery there. I remember that late at night the monks would invite us to attend compline, night prayer, in the chapel, in which was enshrined the hand of their founder, in a glass case, making a sign of blessing, because apparently in his lifetime he had heard thousands of confessions. The hand was far from 'incorrupt' and was black and wizened, and looked quite creepy, and I remember having such a nightmare about it that night! I stayed in lots of creepy monasteries round Italy, not least in Venice and Verona. If you've ever seen the original film of 'The Name of the Rose' you'll kind of know what I mean.

Two lovely masses yesterday, the first at noon, led by the SVP, for whom we give great thanks for all their hard work, and my second mass outside with Holy Family School. It was very breezy, but in our bubbles we all sang heartily, and celebrated the end of what has been a very odd school year. It was lovely to hear the children's lovely positive reactions to the prayer videos I've been sending. They want to see more of Tobias and Fra Cippole, the monk (or the 'monkey' as one of reception called it, quite confusing me at first). At the end of the Mass we filmed today's videos with year six. We're definitely going to continue this next year, so I'll be doing a lot of filming throughout the summer! I'm looking forward to our outdoor mass here at St. Bernadette's tomorrow, but I think we will have to make extra efforts to make sure everything is weighed down on the altar.

If you pop into the porch of the Church, you'll notice on the right, opposite the RIP board, there is a whole bunch of bedding plants and shrubby things (you can tell I am so not a gardener). They are there for the taking, but you may like to put a coin into the moneybox above, which we can pass on to the SVP to help with their work.

Several people coming into Church yesterday were asking me about the face masks I was talking about yesterday, the kind of biker snood things. They're comfortable, and handy to wear all day when you're out and about, and then just pull up when necessary, as I did before ministering Holy Communion yesterday. They are also washable. Whatever face masks you wear, I think we all need to stock up, as I wouldn't be in the least surprised if we have to wear them at mass shortly. This is a link to the ones I have https://www.amazon.co.uk/Headwear-Moliker-Multi-purpose-motorcycling-activities/dp/B06XG6DYG6/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=moliker+mens+face+masks&qid=1594806535&sr=8-5 Always happy to don a new costume, Eileen helpfully demonstrates the wearing of the said face gear!

Whatever you are doing today, try and make it a lovely day.

Saturday night's Mass is on the YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgz-obCrZlc&feature=youtu.be> beginning with the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father Of Mankind'. I'm beginning Mass with a hymn to get us into an atmosphere of prayer, and am happy to take requests!

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.