

Thursday July 16th, Thursday 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.

Hello! It's going to be a busy day here. First of all I have to write this message, constantly drinking tea as I go along. Then into Church to firstly say my Divine Office, and then prepare for noonday Mass. After that it's straight over to school for an end of year Mass on the playing field. The weather doesn't look the worst, and it's certainly not as windy as it was on Tuesday afternoon. I've already learnt a few things for this afternoon from Tuesday, which is to have the mass on my iPad so the pages of the missal are not flying everywhere, and make sure everything else is held down! I'm sure it will be a lovely mass, with all the children sitting round in their little bubbles. After that I have a meeting with Mrs. Satterthwaite who is helping me find a study course for over the summer. Onwards with the day it is!

So for today's Scripture! We have a beautiful passage from Isaiah 26:7-9, a comforting psalm of trust in the goodness of God, affirming the life of the righteous poor. The lords who ruled over the people are soon to be no more and cannot rise, but out of the faithful remnant will arise a new people of God, a resurrection of the Israelite people, the chosen ones of God. Here too we seem possibly have the beginning of the idea of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which is developed more fully in the later Old Testament books, particularly that of Maccabees.

*Your dead will come to life,
their corpses will rise;
awake, exult,
all you who lie in the dust,
for your dew is a radiant dew
and the land of ghosts will give birth.*

And comforting too is our Gospel, Matthew 11:28-30, in fact the most comforting words we could ever hear from Jesus, echoing the Gospel of two Sundays ago, which we used at all our public masses last week.

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

It is a beautiful invitation, but, like all invitations, it is up to us to respond. Do I welcome and trust in the loving care of Jesus? Do I lay down my burdens, and pray for those who are overburdened with the problems of life? Have I the courage to take up the yoke of Christ and follow him? In these challenging days of the last few months, and the no doubt challenging months to come, it is cause for reflection.

*God, my Heavenly Father,
I surrender to you my heavy burdens,
the challenges, the problems, the obstacles in my life right now.
Take them, God, and carry them.
Whenever You are with me, I know that I don't have to bear the load alone.
Likewise, I surrender the outcomes of my challenges to You, Father.
Only You are in control of what will happen next.
As I face those giants, help me to make the right decisions.
Grant me peace of mind too as I leave the results up to You.
And with your Son, I pray the ultimate prayer, 'Thy will be done.'
Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

For our hymn today let us sing 'Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWa8oWu1nQ> And maybe have a listen to 'Comfort Ye' from 'The Young Messiah', a modern re-imagining of Handel's 'Messiah.'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJ6pFmOJto>

And today, June 16th, we honour our Blessed Mother Mary with the memorial of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Hermits lived on Mount Carmel near the Fountain of Elijah in Northern Israel in the 12th century. They had a chapel dedicated to Our Lady. By the 13th century they became known as 'Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,' eventually Carmelites. They soon celebrated a special Mass and Office in honour of Mary, and five centuries later in 1726, it became a celebration of the universal Church under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For centuries the Carmelites have seen themselves as specially related to Mary and their great saints and theologians have promoted devotion to her and often championed the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. There is a tradition that Mary appeared to Saint Simon Stock, a leader of the Carmelites, on July 16th 1251, and gave him a scapular, telling him to promote devotion to it. It symbolizes her special protection, especially at the hour of our death. All our troubles can be placed in the hands of our Blessed Mother, that she alone who knew such closeness to her Son, can place them in his hands.

O most beautiful Flower of Mount Carmel,

*Fruitful Vine, Splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin,
assist me this my necessity.*

O Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my Mother.

O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth,

I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart,

to succour me in this necessity;

there are none that can withstand your power.

O, show me herein you are my Mother,

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands.

In other news, you'll recall that I had a meeting with the Vicar General, Fr. Paul Embery, last Friday. We had a very deep and meaningful discussion, covering various aspects of Church life and theology, and it was quite a serious and profound meeting, as you can see in the attached pic...

On with the day! I hope you are all keeping your spirits up, and look forward to seeing you at Church again soon. I have some exciting news for you tomorrow about the Diocesan 'Virtual' Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Saturday night's Mass is on the YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgz-obCrZjc&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.