

Tuesday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Tuesday in Week Twelve of 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.

And I trust everyone continues to pray for all our needs at this time.

How can you sum up the whole of Jesus' teaching a few words? Jesus said that the two most important commandments were to love God and to love our neighbour, and in this morning's Gospel, Matthew 7:6,12-14, Jesus says '*So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the law and the prophets.*' What more is there to say – it couldn't be plainer or more simple. And yet it is often in these simple commandments to love that we most easily fall at the first fence.

*Father, thank you for bringing me into your family.*

*May I never disappoint you in the way I treat others.*

*Teach me to show love, patience, and acceptance to all who come to me;*

*let me show peace of soul and firm conviction that your will governs all.*

*And I pray that others may see in me the qualities of character  
that can only be attributed to your presence in my life.*

*Make my life a window for your light to shine through  
and a mirror to reflect your love to all I meet.*

*To you be the glory and the honour, forever and ever,  
through Jesus my Lord. Amen.*

We also remember today St. Ethelreda, one of the most popular royal saints of the Saxon period, a seventh century princess, who was also known as Audrey. Despite having made religious vows, she was twice forced into marriage for political reasons – the second time to King Egfrith of Northumberland. With the help of her friend and spiritual guide St. Wilfred, she escaped to the south of England (with the help of a divine seven day high tide) and was finally able to live her life as a nun and founded the great abbey of Ely, where she lived an austere life. She died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 679. Throughout the Middle Ages, a festival, St. Audrey's Fair, was held at Ely on her feast day. The exceptional shoddiness of the merchandise, particularly the lace apparently, contributed to the English language the word "tawdry", derived from 'Saint Audrey.'

*O God, by whose grace the Virgin Saint Ethelreda  
chose rather to be servant of Christ*

*than the Queen of an earthly realm.  
grant we pray, through her intercession,  
that we may be freed from earthly toils  
and be found worthy of a heavenly crown.  
Though our Lord, Jesus Christ, you Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
on God, for ever and ever.*

So Ethelreda didn't want to be Queen, and if any of you have watched 'The Crown' on Netflix, you'll see a lot of monarchs have felt the same way. Incidentally I think 'The Crown' is one of the best television series in the history of sliced bread (I think I've mixed a metaphor or two there), and if you are able I would particularly recommend the episode regarding The Coronation, which is seen and explained through the eyes of the abdicated Edward VIII. It gives a beautiful explanation of the religious nature of the ceremony, particularly the anointing with sacred oils and the words, *'Be thy head anointed with holy oil: as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. And as Solomon was anointed King by Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet, so be you anointed, blessed and consecrated Queen over the Peoples, whom the Lord thy God hath given thee to rule and govern.'* This echoes the words said by the priest when each of us was anointed at our baptism, *'He now anoints you with the Chrism of Salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.'* Recently one of our Parishioners wrote to The Queen, with birthday greetings and also informing her of what we have been doing at St. Bernadette's during the Coronavirus Crisis. One of the Queen's Ladies in Waiting wrote back, as you can see in the attached picture, *'The Queen is most grateful for your kind thought for her and the Duke of Edinburgh and was glad to hear that you are finding great comfort in your faith, and the support of your Parish Priest during this time.'* So the Queen knows what we are up to at St. Bernadette's, and the strong Christian faith of our parish. Obviously there are many Anglican prayers for the Queen, but there is also an official Catholic one, too:

*We beseech Thee, almighty God,  
that Thy servant Elizabeth our Queen,  
who has been called by Thy mercy to rule over this kingdom,  
may also receive from Thee an increase of all virtues.  
Fittingly adorned with these,  
may she be able to shun all evildoing,  
and, finally, being well pleasing before Thee,  
together with her consort and the royal family,  
attain unto Thee who art the Way, the Truth and the Life.  
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

And with all this talk of Royalty, remembering like Thomas More '*to be the king's good servant, but God's first,*' let us sing 'Hail redeemer, King Divine, Priest and Lamb, the Throne is Thine'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMV7737SdiY>

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Christine Rawstron, whose funeral I celebrated at Carleton at 10am this morning. *May her soul, and the souls of the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.*

Have a lovely day!

Mass for the Twelfth Sunday of the Year is available on the YouTube at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PN0e\\_G6n4AE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PN0e_G6n4AE&feature=youtu.be)

The official link for the Mass Sheet is

[https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/uploads/www.rpbooks.co.uk/14\\_12inOrdinaryTimeA.pdf](https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/uploads/www.rpbooks.co.uk/14_12inOrdinaryTimeA.pdf)

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.