



Friday 20th August 2021
20th Week in Ordinary Time Year 1
FEAST OF ST BERNARD

Gospel

Mt 22:34-40

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Love the Lord your God, and your neighbour as yourself.

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together and, to disconcert him, one of them put a question, 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

Reflection By Fr John Lovell

FEAST OF ST BERNARD



St Bernard of Clairvaux was a French abbot born of noble parentage in Burgundy in the year 1090 and died at Clairvaux Abbey in 1153. He is best known for his work in reforming monastic life in Europe during the 12th Century. He helped to promote the Cistercian Order of Monks, founded many monasteries and was very influential in healing political divisions at the highest levels of the Church during his life.

Bernard is also renowned for his great sermons, his commentaries on the scriptures, his advocacy of Marian devotion and his firm opposition to heresy. He was a great advocate of *Lectio Divina* as a way of deepening Christian spirituality.

In recognition of all this, Bernard was given the title Doctor of the Church. Today we pray for his intercession to keep our Church, the people of God, united and strong during this difficult lockdown period of the Corona Virus pandemic.

Our Gospel today looks at the Pharisees and Sadducees conspiring to discredit Jesus in asking, "which is the greatest commandment of the Law?" His answer which is to love God above all things and then your neighbour as yourself, is a great summary of the Ten Commandments. In saying this, Jesus is revealing to us the spirit of the Law, whereas His opponents were obsessed with the letter of the Law. The spirit of our faith is essentially pastoral, which reminds us of a truly great pastor, who was indeed pastoral: our beloved late Parish Priest, Fr Paul O'Neill.

Today would've been the 45th anniversary of Fr Paul's ordination to the priesthood. I remember Paul saying it was always easy for him to remember his ordination date since it was on the Feast of Saint Bernard, which was his second name: Fr Paul Bernard O'Neill. He lives on in our hearts. May he rest in peace. Amen.