

August 20: St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153)

In the year 1111, at the age of 20, Bernard left his home to join the monastic community of Citeaux. His five brothers, two uncles and some 30 young friends followed him into the monastery. Within four years a dying community had recovered enough vitality to establish a new house, with Bernard as abbot. The zealous young man was quite demanding, though more on himself than others. A slight breakdown of health taught him to be more patient and understanding. The valley was soon renamed Clairvaux, the valley of light.

His ability as arbitrator and counselor became widely known. More and more he was lured away from the monastery to settle long-standing disputes. On several of these occasions he apparently stepped on some sensitive toes in Rome. Bernard was completely dedicated to the primacy of the Roman See. But to a letter of warning from Rome he replied that the good fathers in Rome had enough to do to keep the Church in one piece. If any matters arose that warranted their interest, he would be the first to let them know.

The Holy See prevailed on Bernard to preach the Second Crusade throughout Europe. His eloquence was so overwhelming that a great army was assembled and the success of the crusade seemed assured. The ideals of the men and their leaders, however, were not those of Abbot Bernard, and the project ended as a complete military and moral disaster.

Bernard felt responsible in some way for the degenerative effects of the crusade. This heavy burden possibly hastened his death, which came on August 20, 1153.

“In dangers, in doubts, in difficulties, think of Mary, call upon Mary. Let not her name depart from your lips, never suffer it to leave your heart. And that you may more surely obtain the assistance of her prayer, neglect not to walk in her footsteps. With her for guide, you shall never go astray.” (St. Bernard).

AUGUST 2022

Prayer from Taizé

Right at the depth of the human condition, lies the longing for a presence, the silent desire for a communion. Let us never forget that this simple desire for God is already the beginning of faith.

Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- Let us pray for our First Holy Communion families and their Catechists, that the gift of the Eucharist will bring people closer to Christ in hope and joy.
- As we thank God for those who made their first holy communion recently, let us pray that all of us receiving communion at mass prepare ourselves as if it were our first or our last time.
- As we enter the holiday season, let us thank God for all our recent joys and successes and pray that we return rested and restored ready for our mission, bringing people closer to Christ in hope and joy.

Some tweets by Pope Francis

- The first sign Jesus accomplished was not an extraordinary healing or something prodigious in the temple of Jerusalem, but an action that responded to a simple and concrete need of common people. This is how God loves to act.
- Faith is not water that extinguishes flames, it is fire that burns; it is not a tranquilizer for people under stress, it is a love story for people in love! That is why Jesus above all else detests being lukewarm..
- It makes no sense to accumulate if one day we will die. What we must accumulate is love, and the ability to share, the ability not to remain indifferent when faced with the needs of others.

August 6: Transfiguration of the Lord

All three Synoptic Gospels tell the story of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36). With remarkable agreement, all three place the event shortly after Peter's confession of faith that Jesus is the Messiah, and Jesus' first prediction of his passion and death. Peter's eagerness to erect tents or booths on the spot suggests it occurred during the Jewish weeklong Feast of Booths in the autumn.

In spite of the texts' agreement, it is difficult to reconstruct the disciples' experience, according to Scripture scholars, because the Gospels draw heavily on Old Testament descriptions of the Sinai encounter with God and prophetic visions of the Son of Man. Certainly Peter, James and John had a glimpse of Jesus' divinity strong enough to strike fear into their hearts. Such an experience defies description, so they drew on familiar religious language to describe it. And certainly Jesus warned them that his glory and his suffering were to be inextricably connected—a theme John highlights throughout his Gospel.

Tradition names Mt. Tabor as the site of the revelation. A church first raised there in the fourth century was dedicated on August 6. A feast in honor of the Transfiguration was celebrated in the Eastern Church from about that time. Western observance began in some localities about the eighth century.

One of the Transfiguration accounts is read on the second Sunday of Lent each year, proclaiming Christ's divinity to catechumens and baptized alike. The two distinct but inseparable natures of the Lord were a subject of much theological argument at the beginning of the Church's history; this doctrine remains hard for believers to grasp.

“At his Transfiguration Christ showed his disciples the splendour of his beauty, to which he will shape and colour those who are his: ‘He will reform our lowness configured to the body of his glory’” (Philippians 3:21)

A Hug - Anon

Feels good
Dispels loneliness
Overcomes fears
Builds self-esteem (They actually want me!)
Slows down ageing: huggers stay younger longer
Eases tension
Fights insomnia
Keeps arms and shoulder muscles in condition
Is ecologically sound, does not upset the environment
Is democratic: anyone is eligible for a hug
Is portable
Affirms physical being
Is energy efficient, saves heat
Makes impossible days possible
Makes happier dates happier.

A hug makes you feel good all day.

A Hug – Ann Lewin

How good it is being held,
Not clutched, exploited or possessed,
But held, delighted in,
Strength flowing each to each,
Rejoicing in each other's company.

BLESS MY SLEEP – Margaret Leighton

Lord, when I feel tired and stressed
Please grant me peace and soothing rest
So that in sleep I will be blessed
And wake, arise, renewed, refreshed.

***I will lie down and sleep in peace
For You alone, O Lord,
Make me dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8)***