

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

I am going to fulfil my promise.

First Reading

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. I trust in you.

Psalm

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love,
and make you love one another.

Second Reading

Stand erect, hold your heads high,
because your liberation is near at hand.

Gospel

Father in heaven,
our hearts desire the warmth of your love
and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.
Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour
and give us the strength to grow in love,
that the dawn of his coming
may find us rejoicing in his presence
and welcoming the light of his truth.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:

Jer. 33: 14–16; Ps. 24 (25); Thess. 3: 12–4: 2; Luke 21: 25–28, 34–36



In those days
and at that time,
I will make a virtuous
Branch grow for David,
who shall practise
honesty and integrity
in the land.

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



First Sunday of Advent
Year C, 2nd December 2018

*As I wait,
to you, O Lord,
I lift up my soul.*

On this first Sunday of Advent, we are reminded that we are waiting for the Lord's coming not only at Christmas and at the End of Time, but also in our hearts.

Many centuries before the birth of Christ, the prophet Jeremiah reassures the people that God will fulfil his promises. Honesty and integrity will arise from the line of David. The Messiah will come.

(First Reading)

St Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonians, urges them to grow in holiness and in love for one another as they await the Lord's return.

(Second Reading)

Luke describes in striking language the day of the Lord's second coming. He exhorts us all to be ready for his arrival. This way, we can hold our heads high and survive all that will happen. We can then meet the Lord with confidence. Our liberation is near at hand.

(Gospel)

While we wait, as the psalmist suggests, we can pray to the Lord that he will teach us his ways, his faithfulness and his love. **(Psalm)**

As I begin my waiting for the Lord this week, I may like to decide to spend a little time each day in his presence, telling him how much I long to welcome him anew in my heart.

Opening Prayer

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading Jeremiah 33: 14–16

See the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

“In those days and at that time,
I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David,
who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.
In those days Judah shall be saved
and Israel shall dwell in confidence.
And this is the name the city will be called:
The-Lord-our-Integrity.”

Today, at the beginning of the new Church Year, I come to pray for the coming of the Lord.

If I can, I may like to make for myself a little Advent wreath – perhaps just a sprig of foliage near me – and light the first candle.

I focus on the flickering light. Christ, the light of the world, my guiding light.

I spend a few moments becoming still, leaving behind me all worries and uncertainties, trusting in the loving presence of my Lord.

When I am ready, I read the passage from the prophet Isaiah.

What strikes me? What phrase causes me to pause?

I go back to the text.

The Lord is speaking to me. He is going to fulfil his promise to the people, to me. I ponder.

Perhaps I look at my life, and see the times when his promise of honesty and integrity has borne fruit. For those moments I give thanks.

I may also have made others promises. Have I had been able to fulfil them?

I speak to the Lord openly about this, and ask for his help if need be.

‘The days are coming’, says the Lord. I may find the waiting difficult, frustrating. If so, I ask for greater patience for that ‘virtuous branch’ to grow and support me.

Or maybe I am happy to simply rest in his presence, confident that he will come again and dwell in my heart.

In time, I slowly bring my prayer to a close, gently repeating

Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Gospel Luke 21: 25–28, 34–36

Jesus said to his disciples: “There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.”

“Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.”

I give myself plenty of time to pray this passage. I do not rush.

I put myself in the presence of God, trusting that he is at my side, ever willing to support and help me.

I read the text slowly and carefully. The vivid language describing the end of times may be bewildering. I pause awhile and ask the Lord to help me see beyond the dramatic portrayal of his second coming.

Perhaps I can imagine the glorious vision of the Son of Man coming in a cloud. How would I feel?

Would I be able to 'stand erect'?

Or would I feel trapped, unaware, and not ready to meet him?

I speak to the Lord, telling him what is in my heart.

I ask him for whatever help I need.

Perhaps with his help, I might use this Advent period to push aside the 'cares of life', to focus even more on his coming.

The natural catastrophes described above may remind me of the plight of all those people, all over the world, who are affected by tsunamis, heavy storms, tornadoes, earthquakes. I entrust them to the Lord. I may want to find a practical way, however small, in which I can help.

When I am ready, slowly, I conclude my time of prayer by thanking the Lord for being with me.

Glory be to the Father ...