

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

He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,
gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast,
and leading to their rest the mother ewes. *First Reading*

You send forth your spirit, they are created;
And you renew the face of the earth. *Psalm*

Christ Jesus sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free ...
so that (we) would have no ambition except to do good. *Second Reading*

While Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened,
and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. *Gospel*

Father in heaven, you revealed Christ as your Son
by the voice that spoke over the waters of the Jordan.
May all who share in the sonship of Christ
follow in his path of service to man,
and reveal the glory of his kingdom
even to the ends of the earth. *Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Isaiah 40: 1-5. 9-11; Psalm 103 (104); Titus 2: 11-14. 3: 4-7;
Luke 3: 15-16. 21-22



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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



The Baptism of the Lord
13th January 2019, Year C

**'You are my Son, the Beloved;
my favour rests on you.'**

In today's joyous readings we are reminded of God's kindness, compassion and love for all mankind; so much so that he sent his beloved Son, and poured out the ongoing gift of his creative Spirit upon us to redeem us.

The First Reading offers words of consolation and hope to God's people in exile. The Lord comes with power to restore and protect his people, like a shepherd who guides and nourishes them.

The **Psalm** is a meditation on the glories of God in creation, where he looks after all he has made. The psalmist also reminds us that God's spirit is the spirit of life, rebirth and renewal.

Paul's letter (**Second Reading**) tells us that through his life and his giving of himself, Jesus embodied the kindness and love of God. The life-giving gifts of the Holy Spirit were revealed and shared with all.

Today's **Gospel** describes the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus whilst he was at prayer, emphasizing the importance of both the Spirit and of prayer in Jesus's life.

This week, let us pray for an openness and understanding of what the Holy Spirit is offering us and asking of us.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan
and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.

First reading: Isaiah 40: 1–5, 9–11

‘Console my people, console them,’
says your God.
‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem
and call to her ...
A voice cries, ‘Prepare in the wilderness
a way for the Lord ...
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
and all mankind shall see it.
Shout without fear, ‘Here is your God.’
Here is the Lord coming with power,
his arm subduing all things to him.
The prize of his victory is with him,
his trophies all go before him.
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,
gathering lambs in his arms,
holding them against his breast
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.’

I take a couple of minutes to settle down to prayer. I become aware that God, too, is searching for me, wants to spend time with me. I settle my body into a receptive, humble position and take a few deep breaths. I gently notice my stream of thoughts ... I try not to engage with them directly, but just let them be. I allow my whole being to be held by the Holy Spirit, asking for the grace I need to settle me.

Slowly, with loving attention, I read the text several times.
I pause on words or phrases that console or encourage me.

Perhaps I am struck by, or attracted to, the glory of God revealed as the ‘*Lord coming with power*’. How do I feel about the Lord who will protect and defend me when I am vulnerable?

Or maybe I am drawn to God who reveals himself to be the caring, compassionate Shepherd, who holds me close to his breast; who leads me to rest. How do I want to respond to him now?

As I sit either in conversation with the Lord or in silence, I allow God’s presence to fill my awareness. I ask for the grace to be more fully open to what God says to me in prayer today.

I finish my prayer time slowly, saying *Our Father* ...

Gospel Luke 3: 15-16, 21–22

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, ‘I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’

Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you’.

I slow down into my prayer time, and breathe in God’s life and love. I note my emotions and any sensations held in my body, but try not to engage with them.

I ask the Holy Spirit to hold me; to help me settle.

I read the Gospel passage prayerfully a number of times.

Perhaps I try to imagine myself within this scene, as John the Baptist is baptising the people ... hearing his words ... noticing Jesus humbly coming forward to be baptised by his cousin.

Can I share the people’s feelings of expectancy?

Now I may imagine coming alongside Jesus as he prays after his own baptism.

Can I ask Jesus to teach me how to pray as he did?

Perhaps I ask that I might be ready, as Jesus was, for the Holy Spirit to be a more active part of my life.

I take note of how I am feeling and share what is in my heart with the Lord.

I sit in silence, resting in God’s unconditional love for me and all of creation, and ask for whatever grace I need.

I finish my prayer time slowly, by repeating

‘You (my name) are my son/daughter, the Beloved ...’