

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

My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust! *Psalm*

The word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near to you,
it is on your lips and in your heart. *Second Reading*

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone. *Gospel*

Lord our God,
you formed us from the clay of the earth
and breathed into us the spirit of life,
but we turned from your face and sinned.
In this time of repentance we call out for your mercy.
Bring us back to you
and to the life your Son won for us
by his death on a cross,
for he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Old Opening Prayer

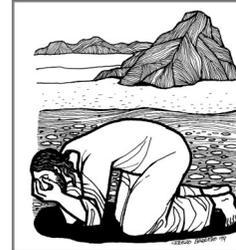
This week's readings:
Deuteronomy 26: 4–10; Psalm 90 (91); Romans 10: 8–13; Luke 4: 1–13



Can I enter
the desert
with
Jesus?

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



First Sunday of Lent
Year C, 10th March 2019

When you call, I shall answer:
'I am with you.'

We begin our Lenten journey in the wilderness. In the **First Reading**, Moses reminds the people of Israel of the story of how they became a mighty nation. He tells of their years of slavery in Egypt, and how the Lord heard their cry. God's people were led through many trials in the desert to the promised land.

The **Psalm** is a song full of confidence in the power of God, to help us endure the difficulties of life. We can imagine Jesus taking comfort from praying this psalm when he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. And yet it is a verse from this very same psalm that the tempter in the desert uses to test Jesus's trust in God. The psalm reminds us that God is always with us, whatever trials we may face.

Luke's **Gospel** account of the testing in the wilderness sees Jesus being tempted to use his divinity for his own needs, and of the possibility of seizing earthly power. Jesus shows that true power comes from centring your life on God.

The **Second Reading** reminds us of this teaching, and tells us that the Word of God is very close to us. It is deep within our being for all who believe in the saving love of Christ. We are all equal in that love, and we are called to proclaim this message of love in our lives. When we call on the Lord for help in our daily struggles, God will be with us.

Let us hold each other in prayer and pray too for our communities, that we may grow in our trust in God and deepen our prayer life in the coming weeks of Lent.

Opening Prayer

Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.

Second Reading Romans 10: 8–13

Scripture says: The word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart. If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are saved. When scripture says: those who believe in him will have no cause for shame, it makes no distinction between Jew and Greek: all belong to the same Lord who is rich enough, however many ask for his help, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

If I am able, I prepare to pray by slowing my body and mind. I become aware of my posture and if possible, I settle my body into a stable, watchful, yet relaxed position.

I take a long, slow, gentle breath and focus my attention on the flow of my breath on each out-breath.

I invite God to fill me with an awareness of the presence of the Spirit in every fibre of my being.

When I am ready, I slowly read the text, hearing the words of the scripture being read in my mind with great warmth and tenderness.

I let the word proclaimed in this letter find a home in my heart.

What do I notice in my body as I pray?

Are there words of encouragement here that I may use to help me deepen my prayer life in the coming Lenten days and weeks?

I pray the words of the letter again ... or perhaps just a few words or phrases from it.

If I choose, I may gently touch my lips or rest my hand upon my heart, imagining the whole of my being filled with the love of God, as I pray: *'(My name), the word ... is very near you, it is on your lips and in your heart.'*

As carefully as I prepared to begin my prayer, I also prepare to close this time of prayer. What do I notice now ... in my body, in my mind?

What do I want to share with God?

Calling on the name of the Lord, I end my prayer with words of gratitude.

Gospel Luke 4: 1–13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf." But Jesus replied, "Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone."

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, "I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours". But Jesus answered him, "Scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone."

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for scripture says: He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and again: They will hold you up on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone." But Jesus answered him, "It has been said: You must not put the Lord your God to the test."

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

I prepare to pray this Gospel by slowly saying, *'Oh come, Holy Spirit, and enkindle within me the fire of your love'* ... or some other similar favourite words to the Spirit. I allow myself to become still in the Lord's presence. Slowly, and with great care, I read the Gospel passage.

As I re-read the text, I enter into the wilderness with Jesus, and imagine being with him in the long days of silence and hunger.

How does this affect me?

As Jesus is challenged by the devil in this wild place, what do I notice about how the Lord responds?

What are the values that Jesus stands for and upholds?

Am I able to share these values, or am I drawn more to the 'quick fixes' and power that the devil offers to Jesus?

I share my feelings with Jesus, knowing that his spirit will always be with me.

As I start my Lenten journey, I ask Jesus to fill my heart, my intentions, and my whole being with his values of compassion and love.

I share my personal Lenten commitment with the Lord, knowing that we will journey together throughout these sacred weeks of Lent.