

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

O Lord, you have been our refuge  
from one generation to the next.

*Psalm*

If all that we have in common means anything to you,  
welcome him as you would me.

*Second Reading*

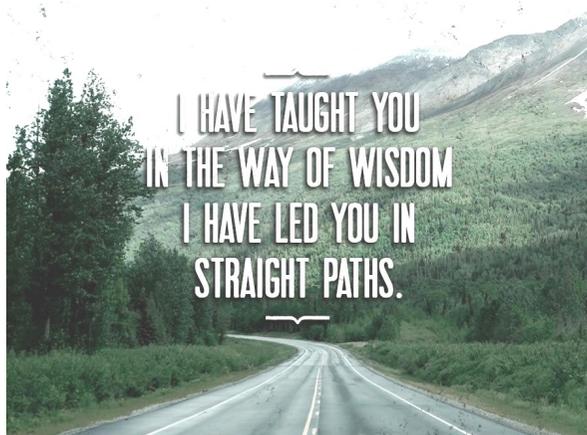
Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me  
cannot be my disciple.

*Gospel*

God our Father,  
you redeem us and make us your children in Christ.  
Look upon us, give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:  
Wisdom 9: 13-18; Psalm 89 (90); Philemon 9-10.12-17; Luke 14: 25-33



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**ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year C, 8th September 2019

'I call you friends',  
says the Lord.

*Gospel Acclamation*

Usually attributed to King Solomon, the **First Reading** shows God as one who is always ready to grant the gift of wisdom to those who truly seek it.

The **Second Reading** is taken from St Paul's letter to Philemon, a leader in the Colossian church. Paul is writing about slavery. He knows he cannot do much to change this deep-rooted social structure, but seeks instead to change people's hearts. He invites the recipients of his letter to see everything and everyone in relation to Christ, in whom there is only unity.

The **Psalm** reminds us that, compared to the wisdom of God, our greatness is as nothing – yet the Lord is a faithful refuge for us.

Christ's call en route to Jerusalem (**Gospel**) is a radical one. Indifference to all the things that distract us is the way of the disciple. God's life can deepen in us through his many gifts to us, but also in our letting go of them.

In the coming days, let us place ourselves within the friendship of the Lord, which is both a place of refuge and source of strength. May we go forward in joy as we try to embrace the crosses of our lives.

### Opening Prayer

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,  
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,  
that those who believe in Christ  
may receive true freedom  
and an everlasting inheritance.

## First Reading Wisdom 9: 13–18

What man can know the intentions of God?  
Who can divine the will of the Lord?  
The reasonings of mortals are unsure  
and our intentions unstable;  
for a perishable body presses down the soul,  
and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind.  
It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth,  
laborious to know what lies within our reach;  
who, then, can discover what is in the heavens?  
As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not  
granted Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from above?  
Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened  
and men been taught what pleases you,  
and saved, by Wisdom.

I place myself before the Lord, asking that my soul might be lightened  
and my mind calmed. I breathe deeply a few times and then relax.

I read, very slowly, these lines from Wisdom. I pause wherever I feel  
invited, holding each line gently and savouring it before moving on.  
I can be confident that the Lord is desiring to reveal himself to me.

The reading calls for humility. Yes, I am a creature in need ... at times  
unsure, sometimes even unreliable and biased. It is not easy to  
understand or accept God's plans.

I could ask myself, what is the shape of my own 'path' at the moment?  
What decisions am I faced with that require a deep and calm Wisdom?  
Am I able, more and more, to accept that God is reliable, and hand over  
to him in trust? Can I accept the truth that God's spirit has been granted  
me from above ... that Wisdom has been gifted to me?

I ponder...

When ready, I end in a spirit of gratitude. Perhaps I can rest easily with  
mystery and unknowing, safe in the knowledge that, somehow, my own  
paths are being straightened for me.

*Glory be ...*

## Gospel Luke 14: 25–33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and  
spoke to them.

'If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother,  
wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot  
be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come  
after me cannot be my disciple.

'And indeed, which of you here intending to build a tower,  
would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had  
enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he had laid the foundation  
and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers  
would all start making fun of him and saying, "Here is a man who  
started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king  
marching to war against another king would not first sit down and  
consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the  
other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not,  
then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send  
envoys to sue for peace.

So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he  
gives up all his possessions.'

I move gently into prayer, asking that the Holy Spirit might help me open  
myself to an encounter with the living Word. I take a deep breath and make a  
very slow sign of the cross, then take my time to imagine the Gospel scene.

If it helps, I place myself among the great crowds accompanying Jesus.  
What is it like to be part of the throng ... walking with the Lord?

I watch Jesus turn and speak. What do I notice about his face, his eyes, his  
voice? Is he speaking to me? How do I feel about what he is saying?  
I pause to notice what is going on within me ...

Jesus speaks of wisdom as a requirement for discipleship. Perhaps I can think  
of times when I haven't been single-minded in my own pursuit of 'the  
intentions of God' (*First Reading*). Are there any 'possessions' getting in the  
way of my relationship with the Lord now?

I spend some moments in the Lord's company, confident and hopeful that the  
One who calls me will give me what I need to be a true disciple. I may be  
limited myself, but the Holy Spirit, who desires to guide me toward the fullness  
of truth, is not. *Glory be ...*