

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

I am the Saviour of all people, says the Lord.
Whatever their troubles, I will answer their cry,
and I will always be their Lord.

Entrance Antiphon

But I have God for my help. The Lord upholds my life.

Psalm

'If anyone wants to be first, they must make themselves last of all and servant of all'.

Gospel

Father,
guide us, as you guide creation
according to your law of love.
May we love one another
and come to perfection
in the eternal life prepared for us.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Wisdom 2: 12.17–20; Psalm 53 (54); James 3: 16–4: 3, Mark 9 :30–37



*Peacemakers, when they work for peace,
sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.*

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year B, 19th September 2021

'Anyone who welcomes one of these
little children in my name, welcomes me.'

Our readings this Sunday speak about wisdom, but from different perspectives.

We can see the **First Reading** as a prophecy of the Lord's Passion, where the 'godless' regard with contempt those who listen to and follow God's voice, condemning them to cruel death.

The **Psalm** also speaks of those who have no regard for God. Seeking God's protection from surrounding threats, the psalmist prays with certainty: '*I have God for my help. The Lord upholds my life.*'

The **Second Reading** points out that jealousy and ambition cause division and rivalry, in contrast to the wisdom that comes from above. Such wisdom, which desires humility and not glory, brings us to peace with ourselves and can be attained through prayer. It is '*essentially something pure ... is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good.*'

Jesus predicts his own death and resurrection to the disciples, who fail to understand what this means (**Gospel**). They have been arguing which of them is the greatest, but Jesus teaches them that true greatness lies in being the servant or slave of all, especially the weak and the helpless, symbolized by the child he embraces and places in their midst. By welcoming and serving the 'little children' we are welcoming God.

Let's ask this week for the wisdom to see Christ in all the '*little children*' we encounter, and pray for a spirit of humility and peace.

Opening Prayer

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbour,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.

Second Reading James 3: 16–4: 3

Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness. Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

I make myself comfortable and settle into my prayer space. As I prepare to spend this special time with God, I try to empty my mind of any thoughts and emotions that are occupying me, asking God to hold them for now.

I notice how I am feeling. Then I gently become still and conscious of God's presence. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me become more aware of that presence, both within me and around me. Perhaps I sense God's warmth and tenderness.

When ready, I carefully read the passage through as many times as I am drawn. How does it make me feel ...? Challenged, uneasy, hopeful, encouraged ... or something else?

James's teaching tells of God's wisdom being pure, and describes some of the good things it brings: peace, kindness, consideration, compassion.

With a sense of gratitude, I ponder where I see these qualities in people around me, and in the world.

Are there any seeds that God is inviting me to sow or tend? Again, I ponder.

Perhaps I reflect on my own prayer. There may be times when I find it difficult, or feel that my prayer goes unheard.

Speaking from my heart, I can talk to God about this, or about any other thought or emotion that has come during this time.

When ready, I close with the prayer Jesus taught the disciples:

Our Father ...

Gospel Mark 9: 30–37

After leaving that place they made their way through Galilee; and Jesus did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again'. But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, they must make themselves last of all and servant of all'. He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me, but the one who sent me'.

As I come to stillness, I may wish to have a lit candle by me, symbolizing that Christ is present with me.

Whenever I feel ready, I slowly read the Gospel passage prayerfully, pausing wherever I feel moved.

If it helps, I may like to place myself in the scene, perhaps as a disciple or a bystander travelling on the road with Jesus, or maybe in the house.

I listen to Jesus's words and notice the expressions and reactions of those around me.

I watch as Jesus holds the child, and notice the tone of his voice.

If I'm confused by anything he says, I know I can speak to him openly, just as I would to a trusted friend.

How might Jesus be inviting me to welcome the 'little children' in our world? Those without influence or status ... refugees, the homeless, the poor, the abused, the vulnerable, the sick, those who are neglected ...?

I ask him to show me. I listen to what he has to say.

Maybe there is a gift or grace I feel I need to help me?

I can ask Jesus for this too.

With a deep sense of gratitude, I end my prayer with *Glory be ...*