

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

O Lord, you have given everything its place in the world,
and no one can make it otherwise. *Entrance Antiphon*

See how he flags, he whose soul is not at rights,
but the upright man will live by his faithfulness. *First Reading*

He is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture. *Psalms*

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith'. *Gospel*

Almighty and eternal God, Father of the world to come,
your goodness is beyond what our spirit can touch
and your strength is more than the mind can bear.

Lead us to seek beyond our reach
and give us the courage to stand before your truth.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Habak. 1: 2-3; 2: 2-4; Ps. 94 (95); 2 Tim. 1: 6-8. 13-14; Luke 17: 5-10



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was not a
spirit of
timidity,
but the
Spirit of
power, and
love, and
self-control.

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C, 6th October 2019

The disciples said to the Lord,
'Increase our faith!'

Today's readings demonstrate our need for the gift of faith and the patience of faithfulness, to give us a new vision and understanding of the world.

In the **First Reading** the prophet Habakkuk looks at the evil all around him and the suffering of innocent people. He asks God, 'What's the point of praying?', when God does not appear to hear. The Lord offers no direct answer, but simply reassures him that the just person lives by faith in God – the One who sees the whole picture.

The **Psalms** urges us: 'O that *today* you would listen to his voice!' For us, 'today' means our own lives, as they are lived in the present moment.

Despite his imprisonment, Paul is confident in the Lord and dares to speak without fear. He reminds Timothy that faith is never possessed definitively but must be continually aroused. He also needs the power of God: the gifts of the Holy Spirit must be the driving force in his life (**Second Reading**).

The disciples are keen to learn and to grow, and ask Jesus to increase their faith (**Gospel**). However, it is very clear that the way of the disciple is hard. It involves dying to ourselves and our self-promoting needs. Jesus's parable reminds them that faith is ultimately a gift from God.

Let's pray this week to deepen our faith and our faithfulness; knowing that it is not based on our own efforts, but on our growing surrender to the gifts of the Holy Spirit within.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.

Second Reading 1 Timothy 1: 6–8, 13–14

I am reminding you to fan into a flame the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power, and love, and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner; but with me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the power of God.

Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. You have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

As I prepare for my time of prayer with the Lord, I become aware of what is in my heart and mind.

I pray for God's gift of inner stillness and surrender; allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to work through me during this prayer time and beyond it, into my day.

With love and attention, I read this passionate letter from Paul to his young friend, staying with words and phrases that are significant to me.

With an open heart, I notice what draws me.

Possibly the 'sense' of the whole passage speaks to me of my Christian life.

As I reflect, does my life of faith, and my own faithfulness in Jesus, feel 'precious', something to 'guard' ...?

Or have there been times when my faith has led me, as it did Paul, to many hardships, challenges and confusions?

With honesty and without self-judgement, I speak to the Lord about whatever arises.

I pray to the Holy Spirit who lives in me to show me the grace and gifts needed in my life and the life of the world.

I rest quietly with the Lord before slowly ending my prayer.

Glory be to the Father ...

Gospel Luke 17: 5–10

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal immediately?" Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty."

I give myself time to slow down, to try to enter my prayer time deeply, contemplatively.

I come to read the Gospel slowly. I let the awareness arise that I am in the Lord's presence, and that his Spirit lives within me.

I allow the passage to sink into my heart.

Perhaps I am drawn to use my imagination and be present with Jesus in the scene. What do I hear and see? I listen to what arises within me.

If I feel moved to do so, I speak to Jesus about my experience.

With the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, I may want to reflect on my own life of faith.

I ask the Lord to show me where his life has been active and ever-deepening within me.

I also beg to be shown the times when I have been driven by a self-promoting and self-serving spirit. Perhaps I also reflect on times when life has challenged my faith to its core.

Is there a desire growing within me which leads me to ask the Lord to 'Increase my faith'?

I share all that arises as I would with a loving friend and Lord.

In gratitude, I thank the Lord for the gift of my faith and ask him to deepen it further.

Our Father...