

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

O sing a new song to the Lord,  
sing to the Lord all the earth!  
Tell among the nations his glory  
and his wonders among all the peoples.

*Psalm*

'Faith in action is love. And love in action is *service*.'

*St Teresa of Calcutta*

'The King's good servant, but God's first.'

*St Thomas More*

Almighty and ever-living God,  
Our source of power and inspiration,  
Give us strength and joy  
in serving you as followers of Christ.

*Old Opening Prayer*

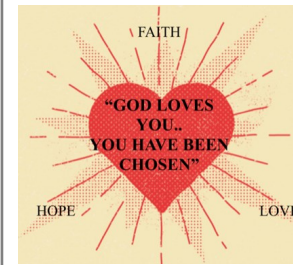
This week's texts if you want to reflect further:  
Isaiah 45: 1,4-6; Ps. 95 (96); 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-5; Matthew 22: 15-21

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Tribute Money*



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



Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year A, 18th October 2020

'Give to God  
what belongs to God'

Today's readings concentrate on God as ruler over all the world. The **First Reading** teaches us about the relationship between God and Cyrus, one of the most powerful earthly rulers. Even though Cyrus did not know God, God works through him, giving Cyrus all that he needs to help accomplish God's plans.

The **Psalm** is a song full of praise for the Lord, who is 'above all gods', and who will judge fairly. The psalmist calls us to speak of the Lord's greatness and glory throughout the world, and to pay him worship and honour.

In the **Second Reading**, St Paul gives thanks to God and prays for the Christian community in Thessalonica. Chosen and loved by God, the community – aided by the power of the Holy Spirit, and strengthened by its faith and hope in God – continues in its work.

The **Gospel** message is that we belong completely to God and are therefore called to offer God our entire selves. Jesus is aware that the Pharisees and Herodians are trying to trip him up when they ask if Jewish people should pay taxes to the Romans. Although he confirms that this is reasonable, at the same time he also affirms that *our first duty is to serve God*, and to give God what is due.

This week, maybe we can pray for the rulers and leaders of our world, particularly during these difficult times, asking that God will work through them towards justice and peace. We ask too that the Holy Spirit will guide each of us in how we can serve God best.

### Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,  
grant that we may always conform our will to yours  
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

## Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 1: 1–5

**F**rom Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace.

We will always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, and constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers and sisters, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction. And you observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your instruction.

As I come to prayer, I become aware of my surroundings, knowing that God's presence makes this a holy place. I take as long as I need to become still. I note how I am feeling at the moment.

God is not in a hurry and waits patiently, listening as I speak of any joys, consolations or anxieties and fears.

Whatever may be occupying my thoughts, I place this into God's hands; confidently knowing that God, who has chosen me and loves me more than I can imagine, understands how I am feeling.

As I slowly read and re-read the passage, I ask God's Holy Spirit to be with me, and guide my heart and mind.

If there are any words that particularly move me, I stay with them, allowing them to soak in.

As I ponder more deeply, perhaps I reflect on how my community ... my country ... the world ... is responding to Christ's teachings.

Where I have seen *faith, hope and love* at work?

I think about my own life.

Maybe there have been times recently when I've found things difficult?

I can be open and share how I'm feeling with the Lord.

Perhaps there is a gift I can ask God for that I feel will help me at the moment?

Thanking God for all I've been shown during this time of prayer, I close with *Glory be...*

## Gospel Matthew 22: 15–21

**T**he Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a person's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's,' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God'.

As I prepare for this part of my prayer, I may find it helpful to become aware of my breathing. As I breathe in, I take in God's love, and as I breathe out, I surrender any concerns or fears I may have to God.

When ready, I read the Gospel passage slowly and carefully, letting the words soak in.

Perhaps I ponder the phrase '*give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God*'.

I think of the gifts I have been given, and how I am using them.

As I read it through a second time, I may find it helpful to imagine myself in the scene: perhaps as a Herodian ... or as a disciple of the Pharisees or of Jesus ... or just as myself.

What do I see and hear? What do I notice about Jesus? How he holds the coin ... the tone of his voice ... the expression on his face ...

Do his eyes catch mine? How do I feel about that?

Is he saying something to me? How am I responding?

Perhaps I want to tell Jesus of any worries, fears or pressures ... anything that might be holding me back from '*giving to God what belongs to God*'.

He is listening, though he already knows and understands.

I can tell him my deepest longings too, just as I would a dear friend.

I ask Jesus to give me the grace he feels I need at this time, so that I can follow better the life that he desires for me.

As I slowly make the sign of the cross, I thank the Lord for the time I have just spent with him, as well as the gifts I have received.