

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

The Lord has been my strength; he has led me into freedom.

Entrance Antiphon

It is good to give you thanks, O Lord.

Psalm Response

Keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that,
in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

Second Reading

Open our hearts, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son.

Gospel Acclamation

Every tree can be told by its own fruit. ...

For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.

Gospel

Father in heaven,
form in us the likeness of your Son
and deepen his life within us.
Send us as witnesses of gospel joy
into a world of fragile peace and broken promises.
Touch the hearts of all with your love
that they in turn may love one another.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Ecclesiasticus 27: 4–7; Ps. 91(92); 1 Cor 15: 54–58; Luke 6: 39–45



There is
no sound tree
that produces
rotten fruit,
nor again
no rotten tree
that produces
sound fruit.

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C, 3rd March 2019

**The just will flourish ...
still bearing fruit when they are old.**

Psalm 91 (92)

Today's readings urge us to draw life from hearts filled with the goodness and teachings of the Lord ... to live virtuous lives that bear sound fruit.

In the **First Reading**, the author uses images from everyday experience to highlight the importance of our words, suggesting that our moral worth (or the lack of it) can be proved by our speech.

The **Psalmist** speaks of the value of continual gratitude to God, and also paints a picture of the sturdiness of the person of virtue.

Paul encourages the Christians in Corinth to see Christ's resurrection as the source of their hope. He also exhorts his hearers to persevere in doing good and working for the Lord. (**Second Reading**)

In the **Gospel**, Jesus also uses simple reflections on human experience in his teachings. Disciples must learn from their master, and in the process become like him. Having warned against the danger of judging others, he also states that just as a tree's value is judged by its fruit, so the true test of human virtue is the way we live our life.

This week, we may desire to pray for a discerning heart and spirit, committed to trying to find God's invitation and his will in the actions and fruits of our daily life.

Opening Prayer

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your Church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.

First Reading Ecclesiasticus 27: 4–7

In a shaken sieve the rubbish is left behind,
so too the defects of a man appear in his talk.
The kiln tests the work of the potter,
the test of a man is in his conversation.
The orchard where the tree grows is judged
by the quality of its fruit,
similarly a man's words betray what he feels.
Do not praise a man before he has spoken,
since this is the test of men.

I begin my prayer slowly. I become aware of any distractions I bring ... thoughts, emotions, sensations.

I ask the Lord to hold them and to draw my inner attention towards him; to become increasingly aware of and responsive to his loving, attentive presence.

I read the text slowly, meditatively, a couple of times.

I notice what image or phrase speaks to me.

Am I drawn to examine my inner thoughts and feelings ... maybe the conversations I have with others?

What do I notice?

Are there any '*rubbish and defects*' in me?

Where does my spiritual nourishment to enrich the '*quality of my fruit*' come from? I speak to Jesus about my experience, and listen to his voice.

Maybe the words of the text lead me to reflect on my relationship with the Lord.

Where is God's life bearing fruit in me?

Maybe I am flourishing even as I grow older?

I ponder my openness or resistance to the Lord's invitation to me.

In my own words, I talk with Jesus about what has come to my attention.

Towards the end of my prayer, I ask for the grace of gratitude for God's gifts, and if need be, for his mercy and aid in my resistance to his grace.

Glory be to the Father ...

Gospel Luke 6: 39–45

Jesus told a parable to his disciples. 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," when you cannot see the plank that is in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye.

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit; people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

Aware that God desires my company, I begin my prayer time gently and slowly. I allow myself to become increasingly conscious of God's loving presence in this moment ... of his living Spirit within me.

I read Jesus's parables a couple of times.

Can I sense his presence as I read them? I listen to his voice as he teaches. Which of the vivid pictures that they evoke invite me to linger?

Perhaps I am conscious of some blindness that prevents me from following Jesus's teachings. I speak to him of this.

Maybe my heart has been judgemental of others.

Am I able to recognise and acknowledge how my life is not always based on God's love and truth?

Perhaps the third parable of the tree and its fruit draws me.

As Jesus's disciple, I may want to examine the fruits of my own life with an open heart.

I speak to the Lord about what has arisen in my prayer time.

I give thanks for the 'sound' fruits of my life ... and if I can, ask forgiveness for the 'rotten fruits'.

I end with a slow sign of the cross. *Our Father ...*