

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

For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues.
First Reading

The faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
Psalm

People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.
Gospel

Father,
help us to seek the values
that will bring us enduring joy in this changing world.
In our desire for what you promise
make us one in mind and heart.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
Isaiah 66: 18–21; Ps. 116 (117); Hebrews 12: 5–7, 11–13; Luke 13: 22–30



'Some are last
who will be first,
and some are first
who will be last'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

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PREGO LEAFLET

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C, 24th August 2025

The time is coming to gather
all nations and tongues.
And they shall come and shall see my glory.

This Sunday, the readings invite us to look beyond our own surroundings and reflect on the universality of Christ's Church.

In the **First Reading**, Isaiah, seeking to encourage the people of Israel after their return from exile, assures them that 'the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues' to see the Lord's glory.

The short **Psalm** calls on all peoples and nations to praise their ever-faithful Lord.

For the writer of the letter to the Hebrews (**Second Reading**), being a son or daughter of God involves behaving as a child should, accepting a parent's discipline, so that they can later enjoy 'the peaceful fruit of righteousness'.

The **Gospel** takes the ideas of the First Reading even further. Belonging to a particular faith community will not in itself guarantee our being able to enter the 'narrow door'. People from all nations will be accepted to share the banquet of the Lord.

As **Pilgrims of Hope** in this Jubilee Year, we pray that people from every nation might be treated with dignity and find a welcome as they seek peace and a place of safety, not least in our own country. We remember especially those trying to escape the evils of modern slavery.



Opening Prayer

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful
to unite in a single purpose,
grant your people to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,
our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.

First Reading Isaiah 66: 18–21

Thus says the Lord: ‘For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brothers and sisters from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the Lord.

I begin by trying to get rid of any problems and anxieties I carry with me today. I may like to sit comfortably with feet flat on the ground, and take a couple of deeper breaths. Then I breathe normally, close my eyes, and repeat on my breath a familiar phrase, like ‘Come Lord Jesus’.

Gradually, I become aware of the Lord’s presence by me and within me, and spend a few moments in wordless contemplation.

Then I read Isaiah’s text slowly, stopping when a phrase draws my attention. Perhaps I want to ask: ‘What do you mean Lord? How do these words relate to my life?’

How do I feel at the idea of all nations seeing God’s glory? Is this a pipe dream or could it really happen?

Might I be one of those ‘survivors’ sent to areas where people have never heard of the Lord or seen his glory?

I pause awhile, and speak to the Lord about any feelings arising, aware that there is no right or wrong answer. The Lord knows me and understands my unique circumstances.

As I continue to ponder, I may find myself bristling at the idea that even those coming from outside the fold might become priests or serve his Temple.

I consider how I feel, and perhaps think of the situation in today’s Church.

I ask the Lord to help me understand my reaction.

Eventually, I conclude my prayer with my own words of thanks for any insights I have received today. *Glory be ...*

Gospel Luke 13: 22–30

Jesus went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Before beginning my prayer, I spend time coming to inner quiet, leaving behind all that is crowding my mind. Perhaps today I can be outside in nature, or look at a picture of God’s creation to help me.

In time, I read these verses. What is my immediate, unreflected reaction?

Maybe I feel threatened by the Lord refusing to open his door to me?

Or am I anxious that I may not be able to ‘enter through the narrow door’?

I turn to the Lord. Trusting absolutely in his unconditional love for me, I ask him to help me understand what he is really saying. I listen intently.

As in today’s First Reading, we hear of people coming from all directions to share in the Kingdom of God.

I may ask myself how welcoming I have been recently to ‘strangers’ from different backgrounds, cultures, or nationalities. Do I perhaps want to keep others ‘last’ while retaining my position as ‘first’?

I pause for a few moments, quietly resting in the presence of God within me, where no words are needed. The Lord knows me and understands me better than I do myself.

I conclude my prayer with a silent, slow, but grateful sign of the cross.