

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

For this day is sacred to the Lord. Do not be sad:
the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.

First Reading

In the one Spirit we were all baptised.

Second Reading

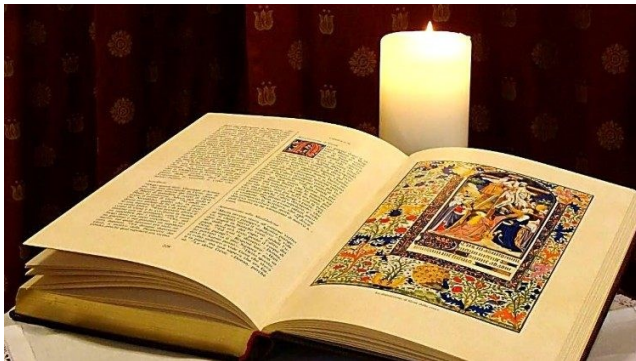
The Lord has sent me bring the Good News to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives.

Gospel

Almighty Father, the love you offer
always exceeds the furthest expression of our human longing,
for you are greater than the human heart.
Direct each thought, each effort of our life,
so that the limits of our faults and weaknesses
may not obscure the vision of your glory
or keep us from the peace you have promised.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Nehem. 8: 2-6, 8-10; Ps. 18 (19); 1 Cor 12: 12-30; Luke 1: 1-4; 4: 14-21



'God's Word
has the power
to open our
eyes ...'

Pope Francis,
Apostolic letter on
the Sunday of the
Word of God
(2019)

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Sunday of the Word of God)
Year C, 23rd January 2022

**'Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life'**

On this 'Sunday of the Word of God', we are invited to deepen our relationship with the Lord through our devotion and dedication to reading and praying with scripture. In each reading, we hear how the Spirit of the Lord revives, liberates, sustains, unites and gives life. The law of the Lord is read out by Ezra (**First Reading**), and the people are taught to celebrate it. The joy of the Lord is their stronghold. The **Psalm** celebrates God's law of love: each line is a litany of the comfort, joy and strength that can be drawn from the Word of God. Paul teaches that although the Christian community is very diverse, with different strengths and perspectives, we are all united in the Spirit of the Lord through our baptism (**Second Reading**). Jesus, filled with the spirit of the Lord, reads from the word of God and proclaims that Isaiah's prophecy is embodied and fulfilled in him (**Gospel**). Jesus liberates, heals, transforms and brings good news. As followers of Jesus who are united by the living Spirit of God, this is our calling too. With our lives centred on Scripture, the living word of God, we are not alone as we pray. We belong to a living, transforming community of believers united by our baptism. We share the same joy expressed by the Psalmist, and are guided by the word of God that the prophets proclaimed. Let us pray that our lives will be a testament to the liberating, healing teachings that Jesus embodied.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.

Psalm 18 (19)

R./ Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight, O Lord,
my rescuer, my rock!

I prepare for prayer wherever I may be, by gently encouraging my body and mind to settle. I take a long, slow breath and allow my body to find its own soothing rhythm of breathing.

With reverence, I read the text. I begin by slowly repeating the response several times, allowing the word of God to speak to my spirit and bring me life.

When I feel ready, I prayerfully read the verses. I pause at the end of each line. I notice which words, phrases or images bring light to my prayer today. I focus my attention on these.

What do I *need* to hear and respond to these words of the Lord?

What wisdom has arisen with me, and how do I choose to respond to the Spirit of the Lord guiding me in my prayer?

I share this with the Lord as I would with a dear friend. I wait attentively and I listen.

When I am ready, I close my prayer as I began, by slowly repeating several times: *'Your words are spirit Lord, and they are life'*.

Gospel Luke 1: 1–4; 4: 14–21 (part)

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,

to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

Having first allowed myself space to slow down and settle, I ask for the grace to have new light shed on this familiar Gospel passage.

I read the words slowly. Perhaps I imagine being a member of the congregation in the synagogue at Nazara.

What would it be like to hear this young man, who has returned to his home community, speak and teach with such confidence and wisdom?

How do I imagine the elders respond to him?

How do I respond to hearing him?

What is it about Jesus that fulfils the words of the Prophet?

If a young person came into my faith community today and behaved in the same way, how would we welcome them?

Do I and my faith community embody these values of the Good News?

With honesty, I share my thoughts and feelings with Jesus and ask for whatever I need to remain a faithful follower of his Way.

I finish my prayer by making a prayerful sign of the cross.