

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

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
before you came to birth I consecrated you.

First Reading

It is you, O Lord, who are my hope.

Psalms

Love does not come to an end.

Second Reading

This text is being fulfilled to day even as you listen.

Gospel

Lord our God,
help us to love you with all our hearts
and to love all our sisters and brothers as you love them.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Jeremiah 1:4–5, 17–19; Ps. 70 (71); 1 Cor. 12: 31–13: 13; Luke 4: 21–30



'No prophet is accepted in his own country'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C

30th January 2022

Christ the prophet

Following Jesus's own use of words from the prophet of Isaiah in last week's Gospel, the readings for this Sunday bring us to consider the rejection faced by God's prophets. But we also receive words we can rely on, words of love and trust.

God's words to Jeremiah, in the **First Reading**, confirm him in his calling, and reassure him that despite trials he will never be abandoned.

The **Psalms** sing of God's help, justice, strength and dependency. From his youth God has never failed him.

The **Second Reading** is Paul's beautiful hymn to love in the letter to the Corinthians. Love is the only true way of life which sustains us whatever happens.

In the **Gospel**, the people of Nazareth react to Jesus's challenging words with anger and some even try to kill him.

Early on in Luke's Gospel we see Jesus reaching out to outsiders, and in his rejection the cross is already present. Perhaps this week we may pray for the gift of trust in God's love that conquers all things.

Opening Prayer

Grant us, Lord, our God,
that we may honour you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.

First Reading 1 Corinthians 12: 31–13: 13 (part)

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge—for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know fully as I am known.

In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

I begin my prayer as always, taking time to relax my body, and calm my mind so as to be fully attentive to God.

I pick up the text and read it slowly and prayerfully.

God is love. I reread the first paragraph replacing the word 'love' with 'God'. How does this alter my response to the reading?

To which of these qualities of God, or of love, am I drawn?

How do I recognise it in others?

I ponder the gifts I have received from God.

In what ways can I use them for his glory? I speak to the Lord about this.

Is there any grace I wish to ask for?

God is love. Has my image of God changed since I was a child?

I speak to him as a friend and give thanks for his goodness and generosity.

As I end my prayer, I pray that I may spread God's love around me this week.

Gospel Luke 4: 21–30

Jesus began to speak to them in the synagogue, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son surely?' But he replied, 'No doubt you will quote me the saying, "Physician heal yourself" and tell me, "We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside."' And he went on, 'I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.

'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these; he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.'

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

As I come to pray, I try to put all other concerns to one side for this moment. Reminding myself of God's presence in and around me, I breathe in his life and love. I ask him to be with me in a special way during this time of prayer.

When I'm ready, I slowly read the text a couple of times.

I imagine the scene, Jesus standing in the synagogue and then sitting to teach. The people were approving of him, proud of this local young man.

But he challenges them quite abruptly.

How do I react? Can I see myself being shaken out of my complacency?

How or when has something similar happened to me?

I ponder this and speak to the Lord.

Who do I consider, even unconsciously, as outsiders? I pray for them, for my community, for all the global suffering around differences of religion, ethnicity ... I pray we will not allow Jesus to slip away.

I end my prayer with a slow *Glory be* ...