

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

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage.

Psalm

If only I can have Christ, and be given a place in him! *Second Reading*

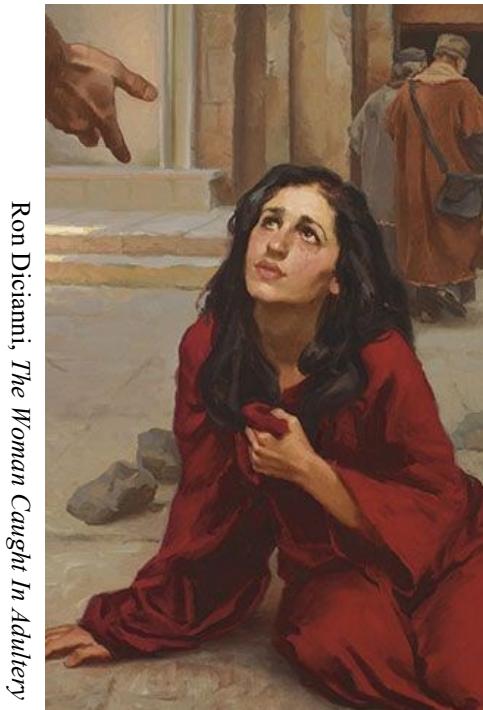
Let us pray for the courage to embrace the world
in the name of Christ.

Change our selfishness into self-giving,
help us to embrace the world you have given us
that we may transform the darkness of its pain
into the life and joy of Easter.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:

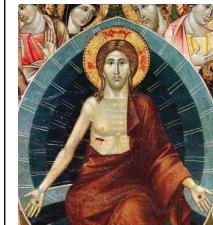
Isaiah 43: 16–21; Psalm 125 (126); Philippians 3: 8–14; John 8: 1–11



Ron Dicianni, *The Woman Caught In Adultery*

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Fifth Sunday of Lent
Year C, 3rd April 2022

'All I want is to know Christ,
and the power of his resurrection!'

We are invited today to recognise the utter completeness of God's forgiveness, and his desire to restore us to new life.

The prophet Isaiah tells how the people learned anew that their God was to be known not only through remembering the past, but also in the experience of their lives in the here and now. (**First Reading**)

The **Psalm** recalls and celebrates the joy experienced by the exiles as they return home. God's mercies in the past give grounds for hope in any present distress.

Paul loves Christ very deeply, and vividly longs to '*have Christ, and be given a place in him*'. He yearns to be in an intimate relationship with him. Yet he also knows that he cannot be complacent and that he is still 'straining ahead' for what is to come. (**Second Reading**).

The **Gospel** tells the story of those who look for the public humiliation and condemnation of the woman taken in adultery, and also of Jesus himself. The accusers have a narrow view of the mercy of God, and wish to use the woman as an opportunity for scoring points against Jesus. However, Jesus understands wisely and demonstrates bravely the overwhelming mercy of God.

Let us pray to experience the complete acceptance and forgiveness of Jesus in our lives this day. As followers of Christ, may we be heralds of his life-giving love, mercy and freedom to the world. We also continue to pray for peace across the world, especially in Ukraine and eastern Europe.



Opening Prayer

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.

Second Reading Philippians 3: 8–14

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you, my brothers and sisters, I am far from thinking I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus.

Like St Paul, I come to my time of prayer with a yearning to know Jesus. I allow this desire to rise within my heart as I slow down. I welcome the presence and action of the risen Lord in my life; his living Spirit within me.

I read these profound, personal words of St Paul slowly, noticing any word or phrase that feels significant to me or captures my attention right now. What ‘lights up’ for me in this text? I let it dwell within me.

As I read the letter again, I allow my heart and body to experience the longing that Paul felt, to know Christ Jesus more intimately. I can trust that Christ really wants to be in relationship with me ... that even I have already been given a place in him. I ponder and rest in this longing.

I notice what is stirring up in my heart and in my senses. Do I notice any blocks or barriers to a deepening relationship with my Lord? Or perhaps I am aware of fears, or subtle dependence on my own efforts?

With an open heart, I listen for any invitation from God that seems to arise within my prayer so far. I speak to Jesus about anything I notice.

With the grace and help of the Holy Spirit, I move into a time of simply resting in God.

I end my prayer slowly, giving praise and thanks to God.

Gospel John 8: 1–11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everyone, they said to Jesus, ‘Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?’ They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, ‘If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’ Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ ‘No one sir,’ she replied. ‘Neither do I condemn you,’ said Jesus, ‘go away, and don’t sin any more’.

Like Jesus before me, I consciously slow down in preparation for this time of prayer. I become more aware of my life-giving breath, and invite Jesus to breathe with me, through me ... to fill me with the Holy Spirit.

I read this striking Gospel slowly, a couple of times, allowing myself to get immersed in this incident in Jesus’s life. I ask that God’s living word might speak to me anew about the inclusive, non-judgemental Way of Christ.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I stop ‘being in charge’ and invite God to use my imagination. I take in the scene: the frightened, ashamed woman; the conniving scribes and Pharisees; the mood of the watching crowd ... and the figure and presence of Jesus in the centre.

If I can, I allow my ‘inner eye’ to deepen my understanding and experience of the forgiving nature of Jesus and his Father.

No matter the circumstances of my own life, I try to be open to Jesus’s loving gaze, and speak with him about what arises.

When I am ready, I give thanks to God for his boundless mercy.

Glory be ...