

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

The Lord says this: 'I am coming to gather the nations'. *First Reading*

Strong is his love for us; he is faithful for ever. *Psalms*

God is treating you as his children. *Second Reading*

Yes, there are those now last who will be first. *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

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The Lord says this: 'I am coming to gather the nations!'

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**ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year C  
21st August 2022

'The last shall be first ...'

This Sunday's scripture bears testimony to the universal outreach of the Lord. Our God is one who desires to gather all people, from far and wide – north, south, east and west – and from lands that have never heard of the Lord.

God also wishes to reach those who are considered last, those who are overlooked. Today's readings reveal a Lord with priorities that differ from the norm.

The ones anticipating a place at the banquet will lose it, but those expecting no place at the feast will be offered one (**Gospel**). Those who have never seen or heard of God's glory will be the ones to see it (**First Reading**). Those experiencing suffering are to remember that they are that they are God's children and not forgotten (**Second Reading**).

This week may we, in response to all the Lord has done for us, go out into the whole of the world and proclaim the Good News through our lives (**Psalms**).

We particularly remember those who are suffering in war and conflict in Ukraine and beyond.



### 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

The Lord says this: I am coming to gather the nations of every language. They shall come to witness my glory. I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, Put, Lud, Moshech, Rosh, Tubal, and Javan, to the distant islands that have never heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory to the nations. As an offering to the Lord they will bring all your people, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on dromedaries, from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, says the Lord, like Israelites bringing oblations in clean vessels to the Temple of the Lord. And of some of them I will make priests and Levites, says the Lord.

As I usually do, I retreat to my place of prayer, settle and begin to breathe more deeply. I ask for the help of the Spirit – I am in the Lord’s care, and am only required to trust. I take my time.

I read the text, slowly, pausing often as I notice a word or line.

The details of the text might seem distracting, but am I being drawn to something? What’s the key message for me today?

The Lord is *coming to gather*. I am to come to *witness*, to proclaim the *Lord’s glory*. In what ways have I felt gathered by the Lord, and where have I witnessed the Lord’s glory in my own life?

Then, what has been my response? How have I witnessed to this glory? Have I, at times, deluded myself into forgetting that all good things are a gift? Do I sometimes take for granted the blessings I enjoy?

What am I noticing as I ponder these questions?

I wait in the stillness ...

I end my prayer by pondering what God has done, is doing, and will do in my life, and by what ways I might want to respond to that.

*Glory be to the Father...*

### Gospel Luke 13: 22–30

Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, “Sir, will there be only a few saved?” He said to them, “Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and not succeed.

“Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ but he will answer, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will find yourself saying, ‘We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets,’ but he will reply, ‘I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked ones!’

“Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And those from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

I enter very gently into this time of prayer. As I read the text a few times, what am I noticing? What is drawing me? Am I struggling with anything? I pause to ponder why.

Like the earlier reading, the theme here is of universality. Jesus is revealing a kingdom where status and assumptions are turned on their heads. The Father’s reign is one that is freely open to all, but not one that can be earned or claimed by any.

I ponder the priorities of the Lord. Who are the ones invited by God?

Who does God open the door to, to gather in?

Do I feel part of this group?

I pause to talk with the Lord about this.

Then, am I open and invitational in response? As I look over my week, have there been occasions when I have felt excluded ... or excluded someone? What are (or who are) my priorities?

I remain with the Lord, getting to know him more deeply, hearing him say in return, ‘I do know you’.

I end with a slow sign of the cross.