

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

The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds.

*First Reading*

When the poor cry out the Lord hears them.

*Psalms*

I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith.

*Second Reading*

Almighty and ever-living God,  
strengthen our faith, hope and love.

May we do with loving hearts what you ask of us  
and come to share the life you promise.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:  
Eccles. 35: 12–14,16–19; Ps. 33 (34); 2 Tim. 4: 6–8,16–18; Luke 18: 9–14



'Through me the message may be proclaimed!'

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



Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year C  
23rd October 2022

God be merciful to me, a sinner!

Honesty and humility seem to go hand in hand, and our readings this week show how essential these attitudes are to our prayer.

In our **First Reading** we learn that God listens with special care to the humble. In his justice, he is no respecter of 'personages': those of undue importance or elevated status.

The **Psalms** picks up this theme. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted. He hears the cry of the poor.

St Paul, in his letter to Timothy, faces the court alone (**Second Reading**). But he knows the Lord is at his side, and it is the Lord who gives him power to proclaim the message. Paul is full of thanksgiving for God's continuous care.

Our **Gospel** is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee is full of self-righteousness, but the humble tax collector, who acknowledges his sinfulness, goes home 'at rights with God'.

This week, may we be confident – as we come to prayer in all our sinfulness – knowing that the Lord, in his mercy, will always hear us.

We continue to pray for the peace of the world, and for all who suffer.



### Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,  
increase our faith, hope and charity,  
and make us love what you command,  
so that we may merit what you promise.

## Second Reading 2 Timothy 4: 6–8, 16–18

**M**y life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I come to my place of prayer. How do I feel at this moment?  
Knowing that God accepts me as I am, I offer him this time, asking to be present to him, and for the freedom to be open to his grace.  
I read the text a couple of times.  
Perhaps like Paul, I am drawn to look at my life, and become more conscious of how God has worked in me and through me.  
I ponder on this.  
With Paul, I try to become aware of the helping presence of God at difficult times in my life. How has God ‘stood by me’?  
I also consider my motivation. To what extent can I say that I wish to spread the message in all that I do?  
I speak to the Lord about what is in my heart.  
I give thanks for all that the Lord has done for me, and ask him to continue to work in me.  
I finish my prayer with Paul’s words:  
‘To God be glory for ever and ever. Amen.’

## Gospel Luke 18: 9–14

**J**esus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else. ‘Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, “I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.” The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.’

As I prepare to pray, I place myself in God’s loving care by relaxing my body and mind. I gently breathe in his love and goodness.  
When I’m ready, I read the text slowly, a couple of times.  
Aware that I, too, can at times embody the attitudes of both men in the parable, I may choose to consider the characters separately.  
As I look at the Pharisee, I can ask myself on whether I focus on God, or on myself when I pray. In what way do I do this?  
I ponder, too, on how I view others, and how they are part of my prayer.  
Without judgement, I ask the Lord to help me look honestly at my attitude. I may wish to remain silent so that he can open my eyes.  
I then consider the tax collector. Although a sinner, he confidently comes into God’s presence. Maybe I can spend time offering God my brokenness and relying on his mercy.  
I speak to the Lord, allowing him to see my whole truth.  
I may wish to give thanks for the witness of many humble people who may or may not be recognised in this world.  
I remember those burdened by guilt, and place them in the hands of Jesus, friend of sinners. Perhaps I also wish to pray that I may not add to division between people.  
I humbly end my prayer: ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’