

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

He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay.

First Reading

He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. *Psalm*

Everything ... in the Scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope.

Second Reading

May the lure of greed not impede us from the joy
which moves the hearts of those who seek him.

May the darkness not blind us to the vision of wisdom
which fills the minds of those who find him.

Old Opening Prayer

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

Isaiah 11: 1-10; Psalm 71 (72); Romans 15: 4-9; Matthew 3: 1-12



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Second Sunday of Advent
Year A, 4th December 2022

A voice cries in the wilderness,
'Prepare a Way for the Lord'

As we take another step into Advent, the **First Reading** introduces one of the main themes of this period of the year: Peace. Isaiah paints a picture of the whole world, of people and animals living together in harmony, led by a King who has all the qualities to rule justly.

The **Psalm**, too, speaks of this hope for peace and justice for all.

St Paul, when he writes to the Romans, also mentions the hope that can be found in Scripture. All the more reason, then, for us to be tolerant of one another, so we can all give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**Second Reading**)

In this week's **Gospel**, John the Baptist appears by the River Jordan to entreat people to repent and prepare a way for the one who is to come. He tells them that being a son or daughter of Abraham will not be enough to be sure of being saved. There is no room for complacency. People are to repent; to change their way of life.

Mindful of this week's readings, we can perhaps look around us and, by word or deed, encourage people to set out on their journey to meet Jesus at Christmas.

We continue to pray for all those who live in countries where there is no peace.



Opening Prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain admittance to his company.

Psalm 71 (72)

**R./ In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.**

O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement.

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.

He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.

He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

May his name be blessed forever
And endure like the sun.

Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
All nations bless his name.

As I prepare to celebrate the Lord's coming, I am grateful to find a few moments to spend with him. Wherever I am, I acknowledge his presence, and tell him about my mood and why I feel the need to be with him today.

When I have found some inner quiet, I spend a few moments reading this familiar text.

What strikes me particularly today?

Maybe there is a word or expression I haven't 'heard' before?

I read of the attributes of this perfect King, on whom the spirit of the Lord rests. Who comes to mind, particularly in this Advent period?

Maybe there are people around me, or people that I know, who have many of these qualities? I give thanks for them.

The picture of a world where there is no hurt or harm may challenge me.

In what ways can I contribute to make it a little more real?

What words or actions would help?

I speak to the Lord and I listen to him.

Slowly, I bring my prayer to a close *In the name of the Father ...*

Gospel Matthew 3: 1–11 (abridged)

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said: 'A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.'

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the River Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you repent, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

After spending some time coming to inner quiet, I read the text several times to become really familiar with it so I can put it aside.

What are you going to show me today, Lord?

I may want to imagine myself by the River Jordan, with John the Baptist's followers. I look at him, listen to him, and reflect.

John calls me to repentance – that is to a radical change of path.

In what ways do I need to change within myself, in my dealings with my family, my colleagues, my community?

Perhaps I find myself among the Pharisees and Sadducees. How do I feel when John addresses us? Maybe I see in myself some of the complacency John objects to. I ponder ... and then tell the Lord what is in my heart.

He knows, he understands. I listen to him.

As I wait for the coming of the One who follows John, I look ahead.

What can I tell him of my desire to be of service to others, to help bring about a better world?

When I am ready, I close my prayer with my own words of thanks.