

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

I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you. *First Reading*

The Lord will bless his people with peace. *Psalm*

Listen to him. *Gospel*

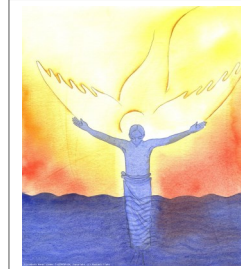
Almighty, eternal God,
when the Spirit descended upon Jesus
at his baptism in the Jordan,
you revealed him as your beloved Son.
Keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit,
faithful to our calling.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7; Psalm 28 (29); Acts 10: 34-38; Matthew 3: 13-17



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



The Baptism of the Lord
Year A, 8th January 2023

'This is my Son, the Beloved'

As Christmastide draws to a close, we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which marks the start of Jesus's adult ministry.

The **First Reading** from Isaiah tells of the qualities of justice and compassion that God's chosen one will bring to the earth. He will come to us as a servant leader endowed with the spirit of God.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter teaches the early church that the Good News proclaimed by Jesus is not just for the chosen few, but for all people who love God (**Second Reading**).

The **Psalm** proclaims the glory of God in creation and tells us the Lord will bless his people with peace.

The **Gospel** shows how Jesus is baptised by his cousin John in the Jordan. With humility, Jesus shows us the path to truth by entering into the waters of baptism. The Holy Spirit descends on Jesus as God the Father proclaims that Jesus is his beloved Son. There is a dynamic relationship of eternal, creative, self-giving love.

As Christians baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are called to follow Jesus by spreading the Good News to all people. As we pray this week, let us joyfully remember our baptismal promises so that we may follow Jesus more closely.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan
and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.

First Reading Isaiah 42: 1–4.6–7

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom my soul delights.
I have endowed him with my spirit
that he may bring true justice to the nations.
He does not cry out or shout aloud,
or make his voice heard in the streets.
He does not break the crushed reed,
nor quench the wavering flame.
Faithfully he brings true justice;
he will neither waver, nor be crushed
until true justice is established on earth,
for the islands are awaiting his law.
I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed you;
I have appointed you as covenant of the people
and light of the nations to open the eyes of the blind,
to free captives from prison,
and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

As I come to my place of prayer, I try to become still in the way that suits me best. I become aware of being in the presence of God who formed me, gazing on me with love. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me to pray.

I read this prophetic passage, taking my time, allowing the words and the images to resonate with me. Where do I notice my heart being drawn in my pondering? I talk to God as I would to a dear friend, sharing what these words and images mean for me.

Are there ways in which this challenges or confirms my image of God?

As I prayerfully read the passage again, I call to mind events in the world, people I know, times in my life where there has been or is a desperate need for God's true justice. In my imagination, by faith, I see God transforming these situations.

I talk to the Lord about these situations and I open my heart to ask how might I be called to serve 'the cause of right'.

With gratitude I end my prayer: *Glory be to the Father ...*

Gospel Matthew 3: 13–17

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you,' he said, 'and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands.' At this, John gave in to him.

As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

As I come to my place of prayer, I pause to remember that God is with me. I slow my breathing to help me prepare to pray, dwelling for a moment on God's life-giving presence within my heart, mind and body.

As the season of Christmas comes to a close, I may like to reflect on how I have celebrated the birth of Christ and contemplate what the incarnation of the Word of God as a tiny, vulnerable child means to me.

I talk with the Lord about this before I begin to pray with the Gospel. When I am ready, I move on.

In this short passage, we move quickly to the adulthood of Jesus and are drawn immediately into the action of the scene .

I read the text prayerfully and use my imagination to see the scene unfold. What do John and Jesus look like? What do I notice about their relationship when they meet on the banks of the river? John recognises the spiritual authority of Jesus and asks Jesus to baptise him.

But Jesus does not seem interested in human power relationships and seeks baptism for himself.

As Jesus is baptised, God declares his love for his Son and this love is energised by God's Holy Spirit descending on Jesus.

Am I able to let God speak those same words to me:
'*you (my name) are my beloved child*'?

What does this stir in me? How do I want to respond to that love?

I speak to the Lord with thanks and ask for a deeper understanding of God's call to me.

I finish my prayer with a slow sign of the cross.