

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

Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Truth and beauty surround him.

Entrance Antiphon

The Lord is my light and my help.

Psalm

Make up the differences between you ... be united again in your belief and practice.

Second Reading

Almighty Father, the love you offer
always exceeds the furthest expression of our human longing,
for you are greater than the human heart.
Direct each thought, each effort of our life,
so that the limits of our faults and weaknesses
may not obscure the vision of your glory
or keep us from the peace you have promised.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's readings:

Isaiah 8: 23–9:3; Psalm 26 (27); 1 Cor. 1:10–13,17; Matthew 4: 12–23



Jorge Cocco (Argentina): *Jesus preaching from a boat*
altusfineart.com

Jesus started
preaching:
'Change your life.
God's kingdom
is here.'

Matthew 4.17
(*The Message*)

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Third Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year A
22nd January 2023

Jesus, Light of the World

Today's readings proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, the light of the world: a beacon who draws all peoples to himself.

When the old tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali were being deported to Assyria, Isaiah promised that their land, then deeply overshadowed by turmoil and war, would one day witness a great light in their midst (**First Reading**).

In the **Gospel**, St Matthew sees the fulfilment of this prophecy. Jesus was, and is, that light. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus settles in Galilee, a region that corresponds to the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali. After proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, it is striking that his first action is to call his first disciples. The task of witnessing to the kingdom is not something to be done by Jesus alone. Rather he calls followers to share in and continue this work.

If we are to walk in the light of Jesus, Paul warns against tribalism, differences and division. Jesus alone is our light, not any of his followers. Paul's own role is to be a preacher to the humble and to proclaim the counter-cultural message of the cross (**Second Reading**).

The **Psalm** is an eloquent prayer of trust, where the psalmist calls on the Lord as *his light and his help*.

This week, we may like to ask the Lord for that light and help in our own lives, and in the lives of all humanity. We pray that we might find ways of sharing his light and compassion with all whom we meet in our suffering world.



Opening Prayer

Almighty and ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.

1 Corinthians 1: 10–13, 17

I appeal to you sisters and brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers and sisters, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollos', 'I am for Cephas', 'I am for Christ'. Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

As I settle into my place of prayer, I ask Christ to bless me ... to give me the grace to slow down. I pray to be attentive to him, and aware of his attention to me. I ask to become more aware of any distractions, fears or attachments, so I can give all my attention to the Lord.

When ready, I read Paul's challenging words slowly. It may help me connect with their meaning if I read them aloud. I notice what images or phrases draw my attention. I rest with these and allow them to speak to me.

Reading the passage again, I may, like St Paul, want to lament the many Christian factions that abound today, whose differences can lead to great tragedy and even bloodshed.

I bring my sorrow to the loving gaze of the crucified Christ.

I pray for the unity of all the baptised in Christ.

Paul's words may lead me to reflect on my own relationship with other Christians, or indeed with people from other faith traditions.

How do I feel towards them?

I ponder my oneness with my sisters and brothers within the body of Christ across the globe, asking the Lord to help me overcome any divisions and judgements I notice within my own heart.

I pray for whatever grace I need, and rest in the presence of the risen Christ.

Glory be to the Father ...

Gospel Matthew 4: 12–23 (abbreviated)

Hearing that John had been arrested, Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!

Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan, Galilee of the nations!

The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light:

on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death

a light has dawned.

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men and women.' And they left their nets at once and followed him.

I come to prayer asking the Holy Spirit to help me surrender any resistance I carry. I take a few deep breaths, and slowly quieten my mind. God is the ground of my being. I remember that he really is *close at hand*.

I read Matthew's narrative a couple of times, then use whatever form of prayer comes most naturally to me. I may draw on my imagination, and allow myself to enter the scene. Or I may focus on a particular phrase, savouring those words that catch my attention.

I turn to look at my own life. How do I experience Jesus's invitation to help bring about God's kingdom on earth? Perhaps the words '*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand*' challenge my attitude and behaviour ...? Or perhaps they bring reassurance in the midst of a suffering world?

I ponder... and rest with Jesus.

I may dwell on Jesus's call to his first disciples: '*Follow me*'. I notice how Jesus calls ordinary people like me into the intimacy of a shared life with him. Can I hear that call in my own life?

I open my whole being to Christ, asking for whatever grace I need to help bring about Christ's kingdom for all on earth.

Our Father ...