

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

It is the Lord who keeps faith forever, who is just to those who are oppressed, who gives bread to the hungry. *Psalm*

'If anyone wants to boast, let him boast about the Lord.' *Second Reading*

... for Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his.  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

'As Kingfishers catch fire', *Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ*

Let us pray for a greater love of God  
and of our fellow men and women.

Lord our God, help us to love you with all our hearts  
and to love all people as you love them.

*Old Opening Prayer*

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

Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13; Ps 145 (146); 1 Corinthians 1: 26-31; Matthew 5:1-12



Károly Ferenczy, *Sermon on the Mount* (1896)  
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'Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

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



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year A, 29th January 2023

How happy are the poor in spirit;  
theirs is the kingdom of heaven!

Today's readings tell us what we need to follow Christ and become more like him. Getting our priorities right in God's eyes may not be easy, nor is it always the way of the world, but it will bring happiness in God's kingdom.

At the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount (**Gospel**), Jesus teaches the Beatitudes, which focus on the qualities he expects his disciples to have. They are not 'rules' like the commandments, more a road map for discipleship, laying out the way to follow him. Jesus is calling us to learn what it really means to be 'glad and rejoice' – in him alone.

The Beatitudes are a restatement of the values mentioned in the **First Reading**. The Lord will protect those living honest and just lives: people of integrity and humility.

The **Psalmist** sings of the Lord's faithfulness and kindness, praising God for his care of 'those who are oppressed': the hungry, the imprisoned, the blind and the stranger.

St Paul reminds the Corinthians (**Second Reading**) why they have been chosen by God. Their gift of faith is entirely due to God's generosity: in God they have found wisdom, holiness and freedom.

This week, we may pray to recognise all the blessings the Lord has given us, so that we might walk more closely with Jesus in his work, just as he walks with us in our lives.

We continue to remember those suffering in war and conflict in Ukraine and beyond.



### Opening Prayer

Grant us, Lord our God,  
that we may honour you with all our mind,  
and love everyone in truth of heart.

### First Reading Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12–13

Seek the Lord, all the humble of the earth,  
who obey his commands.  
Seek integrity, seek humility;  
you may perhaps find shelter  
on the day of the anger of the Lord.  
In your midst I will leave a humble and lowly people,  
and those who are left in Israel will seek refuge  
in the name of the Lord.  
They will do no wrong; will tell no lies;  
and the perjured tongue will no longer be found in their  
mouths.  
But they will be able to graze and rest  
with no one to disturb them.

I begin to settle gently, thankful to have this special time with the Lord.  
Though I may not be aware of his constant companionship, I can be assured  
that he is always present, ready to listen to whatever I may say.

I take a few moments to notice how I am feeling, and place myself before  
the Lord. Perhaps I make the sign of the cross or light a candle.

I ask God's Spirit to guide my prayer, to help me be more attentive and to  
open my heart wider to whatever he may wish to show me.

When ready, I slowly read and re-read the passage through.

I notice any word or phrase to which I may be drawn: perhaps  
*humble ... lowly ... shelter ... integrity ... commands ... refuge ... rest ...?*

What is it that draws me to them? How do they make me feel?

I may want to talk to the Lord about what these words stir within me, just as  
I would to a dear friend.

What grace might I seek to help me '*obey his commands*', to follow the Lord  
more closely?

I may like to end this part of my prayer with these words adapted from  
St Richard of Chichester:

*Dear Lord,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day. Amen.*

### Gospel Matthew 5: 1–12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and  
was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what  
he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be  
satisfied.

Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the  
kingdom of heaven.

Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak  
all kinds of calumny against you on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

I become still, aware of the Lord's presence with me, loving me just as I am.  
Perhaps I sense the warmth of his tender gaze upon me and rest with him  
for a few moments.

Then I read these very familiar 'Beatitudes' slowly and carefully, a number  
of times, taking them line by line, pausing wherever my attention is drawn.  
If it seems helpful, I may like to picture myself on the hill in front of Jesus,  
listening to his words as if for the first time.

In each Beatitude, I notice what is being promised and to whom.

Perhaps I think of 'happy' as meaning *blessed, favoured, fortunate...*

Is there a 'happiness' or blessing that stands out for me?

Is there one I'd really like to have? Or perhaps a mixture of them?

What blessing(s) do I desire for my family and friends, my community, the  
world ...?

What blessings do I see in my own life? I thank God for what I've been  
given. How do I want to respond?

To whom can I be a blessing today?

I try to be conscious of the Lord being gently present to me as I ponder  
these questions with him.

When I feel ready, I slowly end my prayer, thanking the Lord for all his  
goodness. '*Glory be ...*'