

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

I will make you the light of the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

First Reading

The Lord stooped down to me; he heard my cry.

Psalms

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

Second Reading

Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.

Gospel

Father of heaven and earth,
hear our prayers,
and show us the way to peace in the world.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Isaiah 49: 3, 5–6; Psalm 39 (40); 1 Corinthians 1. 1–3; John 1: 29–34.



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 15th January 2023

'Yes, I have seen,
and I am the witness that he is
the Chosen One of God!'

Jesus © Bas Uterwijk

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With today's **Gospel** from St John, Christmastide flows almost seamlessly into Ordinary Time. Christmas ends with the 'revelation' of the Son of God, and Ordinary Time begins with the Baptist recognising Jesus as the Lamb of God.

If we, also, recognise Jesus as the Chosen One of God, what does that mean? What does it ask of us?

A way forward can be readily found in the three other texts of today's liturgy: doing God's will and delighting in God's law in the depth of our heart (**Psalm**); taking our place among all the saints, the holy people of Jesus Christ (**Second Reading**); and being a light for the nations so that God's salvation may reach all people (**First Reading**).

Let us pray, this week, that by 'seeing' God, both at work in the world and present to us in our lives, we might bear witness to the Chosen One by the daily choices we make.



Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.

Psalm 39 (40)

R./ Here I am Lord! I come to do your will.

I waited, I waited for the Lord,
and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry.
He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God.

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.
Instead, here am I.

In the scroll of the book it stands written
that I should do your will.
My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart.

Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord.

In the Gospel that follows this psalm, Jesus is pictured as the perfect servant, delighting in the will and law of his Father. As I begin this time of prayer, I might like to imagine Jesus, now, settling himself to pray this psalm. Perhaps I feel a desire to pray it with him.

So, in my mind's eye, I could imagine myself moving to sit alongside him in a quiet corner of his room at Nazareth. The oil lamp he has lit against the dark of the evening is flickering. It is casting shadows against the wall. The smell of the oil fills the room. All is quiet, save for the sound of crickets outside his window. We sit quietly for some time, listening to this chirping of insects and to the rise and fall of our breathing. Jesus seems utterly calm. What am I feeling? At peace, joyful, expectant ...?

Then Jesus begins to speak the psalm quietly. I listen to his deep voice, perhaps mouthing the words with him.

As I listen, what words are drawing me? What is touching me?
What is moving Jesus? He knows this psalm well – it is a marker for his whole ministry.

When he has finished the psalm, we sit quietly, pondering the words.
When it feels right, I may like to talk to him from the heart about this time of prayer. Perhaps I am moved to end with the words, 'Here I am'.

With your help, Lord, I come to do your will.

Gospel John 1: 29–34

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit". Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

As I come to prayer, I take my time to settle; to become still; to be as attentive as I can be to the one who is coming. I ask for the help of the same Spirit who rested on him like a dove.

I read the Gospel a few times, pausing often.

John, seeing Jesus coming towards him, points him out: 'Look there is the Lamb of God'. I stand alongside John. What am I noticing as I gaze upon Jesus? What do I say of him?

Like John, I might honestly wish to say, 'I do not really know him myself'. Yet I am known by Jesus; and I am called by him to witness to him. How does this make me feel?

The Spirit that has come down and rested on him, that same Spirit, has also been given to me. Does this make a difference?

I continue to stand before the lamb of God, the Chosen One of God. Now, what do I want to say to him from the bottom of my heart?

I stay with this colloquy – this heart to heart – speaking to him freely as a close friend.

I end with a slow sign of the cross.