

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

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.

Psalm

Jesus Christ will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the
free gift ... of being made righteous.

Second Reading

We pray, O Lord, that we may learn to hunger for Christ,
and to strive to live by every word that proceeds from your mouth.

Communion Prayer

Lord our God, you formed us from the clay of the earth
and breathed into us the spirit of life,
but we turned from your face and sinned.

In this time of repentance we call out for your mercy.

Bring us back to you

and to the life your Son won for us by his death on the cross,
for he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:

Genesis 2: 7–9. 3: 1–7; Ps. 50 (51); Romans 5: 12–19; Matthew 4: 1–11



In my daily life:

To which voices
do I listen?

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



First Sunday in Lent
Year A
26th February, 2023

A pure heart create for me, O God

This week we begin our annual observance of Lent. We may want to consider: 'How am I to celebrate this season in 2023?'

The word 'Lent' comes from the Old English word *lencten* meaning spring-time or 'the lengthening of days'; it is a time of renewal, of coming back to life in nature; a time for the birth of young animals, and of looking forward. In keeping with the season, our Lent can be one of invitation to our own renewal in the ways of living with and for God; a time to recognise the love of God made visible to us in creation; a time to notice those ways in which we fall short of the desires that God has for each one of us and for our world, and to pray for the grace to live more fully according to God's ways. We are familiar with 'giving up for Lent': perhaps this year our 'giving up' may be of those things in our lives that are getting in the way of valuing all that God has given us, of allowing God to deepen God's life in us. It may help to take time to notice and to speak with our Lord about what this means for me.

The readings speak of our choice to listen to the voice of God or to be tempted by evil: Adam and Eve are seen to succumb to the tempting voice, but Jesus is steadfast in his rejection of temptation. The Psalm is a prayer of one who knows their own sinfulness, but also that God's love and mercy are more powerful than their weakness. St Paul celebrates the freedom from sin that Jesus brings us. Jesus's gift of love overcomes our sin and brings us to life.

Through our Lent, we ask for the grace to become more and more aware of God's compassion and love for us, ready to journey with Jesus to his death on the cross and to celebrate his resurrection.



Opening Prayer

Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.

Psalm 50 (51)

R./ Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offences truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

As I come to my place of prayer, I remember that God is present, gazing on me with love and compassion. I take as long as I need to become still in the presence of God. I share with God the reality of me in this moment, knowing that God loves me just as I am.

When I am ready, I read the psalm slowly and attentively, noticing those words or phrases that seem to speak most fully for me. I ponder their meaning.

The psalmist asks for God's compassion, for a pure heart, for the joy of God's help. What do I want to say to the Lord?

What do I notice about the psalmist's relationship with God? Perhaps I long for the same hope, trust, confidence of forgiveness ... or something else. For what do I want to ask today?

After a while, I become quiet, resting in the presence of God. I allow myself simply to be loved, just as I am. I listen for whatever God might have to say to me.

I end my prayer slowly, perhaps with the words '*A pure heart create for me, O God*' or '*Give me again the joy of your help*'.

Gospel Matthew 4: 1–11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.'
But he replied, 'Scripture says: One does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'
The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for Scripture says:
He will put you in the angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'
Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:
You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'
Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all of these,' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.'
Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For Scripture says:
You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'
Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

After coming to stillness in whatever way is best for me, I read this challenging passage. It may help me to remember that Jesus became a human being like me in all things but sin. The temptations Jesus experiences are common to us all, but I can draw strength from his power to resist them. I can always ask for his help, confident of his love and care for me.

Jesus is tempted to make bread to satisfy his hunger. Instead he chooses to listen to God. Are there ways in which I seek material comfort or self-satisfaction rather than to live by God's values?

Jesus is tempted to put on a show to attract the attention of the people, but he chooses not to exceed the limitations of his humanity.

In what ways do I seek to look good before others, or to act beyond the limitations of my time, energy or commitments?

Jesus is tempted to the compromise of 'having it all' by losing his integrity before God. He chooses the ways of God.

Do I need to revisit any aspect of my life, talking it over with Jesus?

After a time of reflection, I stay with Jesus for a while. Perhaps we talk as one friend to another, or simply sit quietly together.

Gently, I end my prayer, asking for whatever grace I need.