

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

Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. *First Reading*

He is a light in the darkness for the upright. *Psalm*

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. *Gospel*

In faith and love we ask you, Father,
to watch over your family gathered here.

In your mercy and loving kindness
no thought of ours is left unguarded,
no tear unheeded, no joy unnoticed.

Through the prayer of Jesus
may the blessings promised to the poor in spirit
lead us to the treasures of your heavenly kingdom.

Old Opening Prayer

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

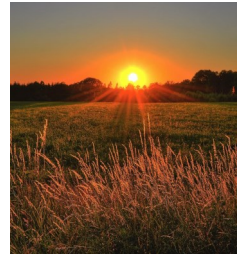
Isaiah 58: 7–10; Psalm 111 (112); 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5; Matthew 5: 13–16



Salt of the earth, light of the world

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A
5th February 2023

A Light in the Darkness

Our readings this Sunday lead us to focus on what Jesus considers to be the qualities of his disciples. In following his teaching, we can become silent witnesses to his kingdom in our world.

Isaiah, in the **First Reading**, tells the returned exiles that their prayer and observance are not just for themselves, but for action – and for sharing with their neighbour. They, in turn, will be healed by the way they live.

The **Psalm** is a prayer of praise for the 'good man', who acts with generosity, mercy and justice. The good person reveals something of God to others. Their good deeds will be rewarded with glory.

St Paul, in the **Second Reading**, tells how he went about humbly to preach a crucified Christ, so that his hearers should build their faith not on human philosophy, but on the power of God.

In the **Gospel** Jesus tells us that we are to be salt of the earth and light of the world. This is how we give the Father praise.

Let us strive this week to remember that in the darkness of today's world, we are called to be Christ-like in everything that we do, and in the way we live.



Opening Prayer

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,
they may be defended always by your protection.

First Reading Isaiah 58: 1–10

Thus says the Lord:
Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,
clothe the one you see to be naked
and turn not from your own kin.
Then will your light shine like the dawn
and your wound be quickly healed over.
Your integrity will go before you
and the glory of the Lord behind you.
Cry, and the Lord will answer;
call, and he will say, 'I am here.'
If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
if you give your bread to the hungry,
and relief to the oppressed,
your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows become like noon.

I come to my place of prayer. I take time to relax, to breathe gently and to remind myself that I am in God's loving presence.

What grace do I wish to ask for during this time?

I read the text carefully, noting what strikes me.

It speaks of right relationship with my neighbour.

How can I apply this in my own life: helping the poor, the hungry, the naked, refraining from oppression and violence ...?

Where do I feel drawn to action?

I speak to the Lord about this, asking him to show me the way.

What have I experienced by forgetting self and reaching out to others?

Or what have I felt when another reaches out to me?

I give thanks to the Lord for being able to give and to receive.

Perhaps I ask him to heal me, to lighten my darkness.

Or perhaps I ask him to work in me and through me, so that his light will shine.

I end my prayer asking the Lord to be with me this week, as I strive to live by his values.

Gospel Matthew 5: 13–16

Jesus said to his disciples:
'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by everyone.'
'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of all people, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

As I settle to pray, I slow down and become aware of being in God's presence. I gently breathe in his goodness and love. I remain in this awareness.

When I am ready, I read the text a couple of times.

I consider the metaphor of salt. I look to Jesus, or to a favourite saint, or to people I know, and become aware of the different ways they radiate goodness. I give thanks to God for this.

What strikes me most in these examples?

How can I apply this teaching to my life in a practical way?

I may also want to ask pardon for the ways I perhaps dampen spirits and become despondent, when I become 'taste-less'.

I ponder about being light – how it scatters darkness, and brings joy and warmth. How do I experience this, at the moment, and how do I share it?

Or can I sometimes be negative or selfish and hide my light?

I speak to the Lord about this.

But Jesus tells me that I am salt of the earth, light of the world – I thank him for these gifts, given in his love.

Perhaps I ask to be worthy of his trust, and for the grace to spread that love, hope and joy in my life, just as I receive it from others.

I end my time of prayer with a *Glory be* ...