

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

To behave faithfully is within your power.

First Reading

They are happy those who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts.

Psalms

I have not come to abolish [the law of the Prophets],
but to complete them.

Gospel

The one who keeps and teaches my commandments will be
considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

Gospel

O Lord my God, because you are so good,
I am very sorry that I have offended you,
and with your help I will not sin again.

Simple Act of Contrition

God our Father, you have promised to remain for ever
with those who do what is just and right.

Help us to live in your presence.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Ecclesiasticus 15: 15–20; Ps. 118 (119); 1 Cor. 2: 6–10; Matthew 5: 17–37



May my
footsteps be firm
to obey your
statutes.

Psalms 118 (119)

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 12th February 2023

They are happy
who follow God's law!

The readings today are all concerned with the law and commandments of Moses. They reflect on the happiness which can be ours if we keep to the spirit of the law and not just its letter.

In the **First Reading** from the book of Ecclesiasticus, the author stresses that we are given absolute freedom to choose to keep the commandments or not.

In the **Psalms** we are assured of happiness if we keep God's law. The psalmist addresses God in trusting words, as one friend would to another.

St Paul is keen to tell the Corinthians that wisdom comes from God. We cannot fully understand God's purpose for us, but need the help of the Spirit to really appreciate the depths of God (**Second Reading**).

Finally, in the **Gospel**, we hear Jesus telling his disciples that he has come to complete the law, not to abolish it. He is the fulfilment of the law. Using a few everyday examples, he shows how we need to go beyond the letter of the commandments and truly understand what is behind them.

This week, we might pray for all law makers, ecclesiastical or secular, that they always work for the greater good of all. We also pray that the Spirit will be with all those who have the power to bring greater peace in the world.



Opening Prayer

O God, who teach us
that you abide in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

Psalm 118 (119)

R./ They are happy who follow God's law!

They are happy whose life is blameless,
who follow God's law!

They are happy those who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts.

You have laid down your precepts
to be obeyed with care.

May my footsteps be firm
to obey your statutes.

Bless your servant and I shall live
and obey your word.

Open my eyes that I may consider
the wonders of your law.

Teach me the demands of your statutes
and I will keep them to the end.

Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart.

What mood am I in as I come to pray today: eager, resentful, expectant, needy ...? However I feel, I acknowledge my mood without judging. I take a few deep breaths, and try to focus on the Lord, trusting that he is there with me, patiently waiting for me to turn to him.

I consider the text given to me today. I recall that Jesus will have prayed it many times. So, I read the verses above, slowly, reverently.

What strikes me?

Maybe it is the word *law* and all its synonyms: *precepts, statutes, word*.

I ponder: How do I relate to laws?

Are they a constraint, curtailing my freedom? Or, on the contrary, are they designed to shelter me from evil-doers and bring me happiness?

I read the last three stanzas again, conscious that I am speaking to the Lord, trusting that he listens to me. I pause. What happens?

Perhaps I can choose one line or one verse of the psalm and carry it with me, repeating it throughout the day, keeping it in my heart.

Thank you, Lord, for your great love for me.

Gospel Matthew 5: 17–37 (part)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the law of the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the law until its purpose is achieved. ... For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the Kingdom of heaven. You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: you must not kill; and if anyone does kill they must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother or sister will answer for it before the court. ...

You have learnt how it was said: you must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if someone looks at a woman or man lustfully, they have already committed adultery with them in their heart.

Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but you must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. ... All you need to say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

Before starting to pray this Gospel, I may want to read the Opening Prayer on the front page several times, and let its meaning come to the fore: *'Teach me ... so my heart can become a dwelling pleasing to you'*.

When I feel quiet and ready, I read the text above slowly and reflectively. I stop and ponder where my attention is drawn.

As in today's Psalm, the focus is on the law, and here Jesus invites me to look beyond its letter.

I may not have killed, but anger is probably an emotion I can relate to.

Perhaps I can recall incidents when my temper got the better of me.

I speak to the Lord about them and tell him how I dealt with the situation. With hindsight, would I do the same again?

I ponder the examples Jesus gives for breaking the law. Actions are not always necessary: a look or a word is often enough.

As I reflect on the way I interact with others, to what extent do I recognise that I may not have strictly kept to the law? If need be, I may want to express my sorrow in my own words, or with a favourite act of contrition.

As I finish my time of prayer, I thank the Lord for being with me, for listening to me and guiding me. *Glory be ...*