

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

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us!

Psalm

The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
which has been given us. *Second Reading*

'... O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.'

Thou art indeed just, Lord, Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ

Father, you have taught us to overcome our sins
by prayer, fasting and works of mercy.
When we are discouraged by our weakness,
give us confidence in your love.

Old Opening Prayer

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

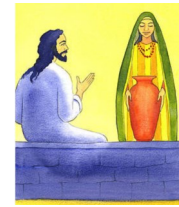
Exodus 17: 3-7; Psalm 94 (95); Romans 5: 1-2,5-8; John 4: 5-42



'Give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Third Sunday of Lent
Year A, 12th March 2023

'The water that I shall give will turn into a
spring inside you, welling up to eternal life'

The readings for this Sunday centre around the themes of water and life, helping us to reflect on our true desires.

As they thirst in the desert, the chosen people of Israel begin to lose their trust in God. God responds to Moses's urgent cry for help by providing water from a rock, thus satisfying their thirst. (**First Reading**) The **Psalmist** responds by imploring us to listen to and trust in the Lord. Whilst joyfully singing our thanks to God, the source of all life, we are called to soften our hearts for God's love to flow through.

In the long **Gospel**, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. He brings her to new life by showing her respect and compassion. Jesus invites her to trust in him and drink from the 'living water' that only he can give her, revealing himself as the Messiah. She responds by rushing back to her hometown: a new disciple excitedly sharing Jesus's message.

The **Second Reading** reminds us how great is the depth of God's unconditional love for us: though sinners, we are forgiven. The 'living water' promised in the Gospel is God's love poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us at our baptism. Our faith in Jesus quenches our thirst and brings us hope.

During Lent, let's pray that in listening and responding with open hands and hearts to Jesus's invitation to draw and drink deeply from his well of 'living water', we may see ourselves and each other through eyes of love.



Opening Prayer

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Second Reading Romans 5: 1–2, 5–8

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. This hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men and women. It is not easy to die even for a good person – though of course for a really worthy person, someone might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

I come to wherever I wish to pray today, making myself comfortable in the way I know best. I may like to have a crucifix or candle nearby, something that symbolizes the Lord's presence here with me.

I take as long as I need to settle: there is no rush. The Lord is always waiting ready to welcome me, gazing lovingly upon me.

I invite the Holy Spirit to guide me and help me be open to whatever God may wish to show me.

In time, I prayerfully read and reread this letter from St Paul, pausing at any word or phrase that resonates for me.

Maybe there's something I'm particularly drawn to?

Faith ... peace ... hope ... love ... hearts ...?

Or perhaps *helpless ... sinful ...?*

I mull over why this is, again taking as long as I wish.

As I read, perhaps I substitute 'we' with 'I' and 'us' with 'me'.

How does that make me feel?

I may like to ponder on all that Christ has done for me.

How can I be more open to God's love?

In my own words and from my heart, I share openly with the Lord how I am feeling just now, just as I would a close and trusted friend.

I slowly draw my prayer to a close, giving thanks with '*Glory be ...*'

John 4: 5–42 (abbreviated)

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied: 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: "Give me a drink", you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir', she answered, 'and the well is deep: how would you get this living water?'

Jesus replied: 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again; the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside them, welling up to eternal life'.

'Sir', said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water'.

Asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I read the passage a few times, pausing wherever my attention may be especially drawn.

Perhaps I picture the scene in my mind's eye. I notice Jesus, parched and weary from the noon day heat ... the woman with her empty jug. I look for the expressions on their faces. I listen to their conversation, noticing how Jesus initiates it and gently leads her.

Maybe I now place myself by the well, and hear Jesus saying *my* name, offering *me* living water. What does that mean to me? How do I respond? Perhaps I hear myself saying, 'Lord, give *me* that water always'.

I notice how Jesus breaks with tradition ... not only by speaking to a lone woman, but also to one considered an outsider.

What groups might our society view as 'outsiders' today?

How do I feel about that?

Perhaps there is something that has arisen from my prayer that I want to tell or ask Jesus. I listen to what he might be saying to me.

Giving thanks for all that Jesus offers and will continue to offer me, I end my prayer with a slow sign of the cross.