

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

I shall put my spirit in you and you will live. *First Reading*

My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word. *Psalm*

If Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself. *Second Reading*

'Unbind him, let him go free!' *Gospel*

Father,  
help us to be like Christ your Son,  
who loved the world and died for our salvation.

Inspire us by his love,  
guide us by his example.

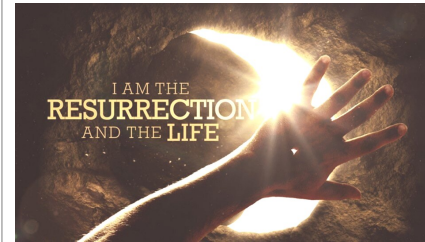
*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:  
Ezekiel 37: 12–14; Psalm 129 (130); Romans 8: 8–11; John 11: 1–45



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**ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Fifth Sunday of Lent  
Year A, 26th March 2023

Jesus,  
Resurrection and Life!

Today's readings are a reminder of how God wishes to release us from all that holds us back from him, whether it be sin, despair or the grave itself. God desires to carry us from the emptiness of death, in all its forms, to new life in the Spirit.

In the **First Reading**, the prophet Ezekiel tells how God will call us, even from the very grave, to offer us the Spirit of life. We will be brought back home to ourselves, and settled on our own soil.

The **Psalm** shows this same upward movement, from the depths of despair and guilt, to the joy and the fullness of life brought about through redemption.

The **Second Reading** reveals how this new life is possible – only by Christ living in us. We, ourselves, will be home to the Spirit of God.

The **Gospel** recalls the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus is Resurrection and life and we will see God's glory when we have faith in him.

Perhaps, this week, I might feel called to renew my belief in the one who is Resurrection and fullness of life, and to ponder anew the gifts of life, freedom and joy which the Lord freely offers. What might life in his Spirit look like in the coming week?



### Opening Prayer

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,  
may we walk eagerly in that same charity  
with which, out of love for the world,  
your Son handed himself over to death.

## Psalm 129 (130)

**R./ With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

**O**ut of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
Lord, hear my voice  
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?  
But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord  
more than watchman for daybreak.  
(Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.)

Because with the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption,  
Israel he will redeem from all its iniquity.

As I enter into this time of prayer, how am I feeling? What is going on my life? I bring my life, myself, into the Lord's presence very slowly. It takes time to become still. I ask for the help of Christ's Spirit dwelling in me. I patiently await his call.

When I feel settled, I slowly read the psalm a few times, pausing often to notice what is going on within. As I ponder what seems to be moving me, I linger there, perhaps voicing a line or word out loud. Perhaps I share with the Lord, very simply, what seems important to me just now ...

How are things for me at the moment? Do I feel I am in the depths? Is life tough? Have I been pleading for release or relief for some time? Do I feel I am even being heard?

The psalmist speaks of waiting for the Lord. What is it like to wait and wait, even when, at times, there seems to be no end in sight?

I speak to the Lord about this.

Perhaps, I am drawn to recall times when I have been heard. When I've found forgiveness, and felt the balm of mercy and redemption, when my longings have been met. I bring to mind any memories of the Lord's goodness to me.

I pause, in the presence of the Lord, to ponder what is arising within. Only when ready do I end with a slow sign of the cross.

## Gospel John 11: 1–45 (abbreviated)

**T**he sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.' Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' ...

When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' ...

Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I know indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.' Then he cried out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

I read this Gospel slowly, prayerfully, even imaginatively. Though it has been much shortened, there are great riches here. What am I noticing?

The two sisters respond differently to the death of their brother. To Martha's questions, Jesus asks her a faith question; to Mary's anguish and weeping, Jesus responds with emotions of his own. He loves them both.

In times of crisis, do I tend to respond with my head or my heart?

And how do I encounter the Lord in such moments?

Am I able, even when feeling the Lord has seemed slow to answer my pleading, to know I am loved, held and cared for?

I end by speaking, as one who is much loved, to the Lord from my heart.