

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

Cry out with joy to God all the earth!
O sing to the glory of his name.

Psalm

Always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason
for the hope that you all have.

Second Reading

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.'

Gospel

Ever-living God,
help us to celebrate our joy
in the resurrection of the Lord
and to express in our lives
the love we celebrate.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
Acts 8: 5–8.14–17; Psalm 65 (66); 1 Peter 3: 15–18; John 14: 15–21

Detail from the *Maeztà* of Duccio (Sienna altarpiece, 1308–11)
Jesus bids farewell to his eleven remaining disciples



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Sixth Sunday of Easter
Year A, 14th May 2023

The Father will give you another
Advocate to be with you forever

Eastertide is nearly at an end. There is a sense that an important event is about to happen. As the readings this week seek to reassure us, we will not be left without comforting support.

In the **First Reading**, we see how active the Apostles are in spreading the Good News. They are welcomed even in Samaria and the people receive the Holy Spirit.

The **Psalm** expresses the joy they must have felt. We can imagine the grateful disciples praying: 'Before you all the earth shall bow, shall sing to you, sing to your name!'

But all was not plain sailing for these new communities. They often encountered persecution (**Second Reading**). Peter tries to encourage them, reminding them of the sufferings of the innocent Jesus. They are to answer their accusers with courtesy and respect.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus reassures his friends. He will not leave them without support, as 'orphans', but will ask his Father to send them help after he has left. The Spirit of truth will be with them.

In my prayer this week, I may want to reflect on Jesus's promises and draw strength from them, so that I can speak to others about my beliefs with greater confidence. I continue to ask Father, Son and Spirit to inspire all peoples to work for peace.



Opening Prayer

Grant, almighty God,
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy,
which we keep in honour of the risen Lord,
and that what we relive in remembrance
we may always hold to in what we do.

Second Reading 1 Peter 3: 15–18

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Before reading the text above, I try to become still, asking the Lord to help me be open to what he has to say to me today.

I take a couple of deep breaths, then breathe normally.

Then, and only then, I read these verses, perhaps several times.

I ponder. In what ways do these words relate to my life today?

Perhaps I can recall instances when people have asked me about my Christian faith, surprised at my hopeful outlook on life.

To what extent did I feel free to share my values openly, with courtesy and respect, regardless of what others might then think of me?

What did I tell them? Did I feel comfortable, or embarrassed and fearful?

Maybe I remember being mocked or despised for being a Christian. How did I cope? Who or what helped me in those circumstances?

Sometimes pressure can be brought to bear in very subtle ways, not so much in what people say as in what they refrain from saying because they know my Christian beliefs.

How does the knowledge that Christ, though innocent, died for me, a sinner, help me when I become aware of this?

I speak to the Lord, trusting that he is always ready to hear me, whatever the time of day or night.

When I am ready, I conclude my prayer, without rushing, thanking the Lord for any insights he has given me.

Gospel John 14: 15–21

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

Whether I have plenty of time to pray, or can only manage to snatch a few quiet moments as I travel or do some mindless chore, I try to come to quiet. I take a deep breath and then read these verses from John's gospel.

'If you love me ...' I imagine the Lord looking straight at me and telling me those words. Perhaps I recall Peter's anxious answer by the Sea of Tiberias 'Lord, you know I love you'... How do I respond now?

Jesus will soon be going to his Father, but he announces the coming of the Spirit of truth.

I ponder on 'goings' and 'comings' in my life.

How did I feel about them? Has it been easy or difficult to adjust to a new situation? What did I do?

Maybe just now I feel isolated and lonely, bruised by too many 'goings'. How does Jesus's promise of a new 'coming' help me?

Jesus assures his disciples, assures me, that we will then understand the intimate relationship and the absolute love between Father and Son.

Perhaps all I can do just now is to accept his word and patiently wait until all is revealed in total trust.

Eventually, I bring my prayer to an end, thanking the Lord in my own words.