

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

Go out and stand before the Lord.

First Reading

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy,
and give us your saving help.

Psalms

'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.'

Gospel

'Truly you are the Son of God!'

Gospel

Almighty and ever-living God,
your Spirit made us your children,
confident to call you Father.
Increase your Spirit within us
and bring us to your promised inheritance.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
1 Kings 19: 9; 11–13; Psalm 84 (85); Romans 9: 1–5; Matthew 14: 22–33



*Elijah, 14th-c fresco, Gracanica Monastery, Serbia
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My soul
is waiting
for the
Lord

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 13th August 2023

A voice that speaks of peace

Our Sunday readings this week reiterate the need to listen to God's voice in all the circumstances of our lives, especially in times of trial. Thereby we might become artisans of peace in our world.

In the **First Reading**, God appears to a despondent Elijah in the voice of a gentle breeze, and the prophet gains courage to face his mission.

The **Psalms** could be Elijah's prayer: the psalmist is eager to hear what the Lord has to say.

The disciples are also disheartened (**Gospel**), and slow to recognize the Lord in the midst of the storm. They worship him as he reaches out to save them.

St Paul, writing to the Romans, is saddened that the Jewish people have not recognized Jesus. He is willing to put his own salvation on the line to help his people. (**Second Reading**)

May we remind ourselves this week that Christ, our peace, is always with us, and with our world, amidst the storms and difficulties of our lives.



Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.

First Reading 1 Kings 19: 9, 11–13

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, he went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord’. Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

As I prepare to pray, I become aware of being in God’s presence.
I take the time to slow down, to breathe gently, and focus on his love and compassion for me.

When I’m ready, I read the text slowly a couple of times.

Perhaps I can imagine Elijah alone, hunted, depressed, and hiding in a cave.

Can I relate to something of his situation?

What was it like? ... or perhaps I am feeling like that now, myself?

I remind myself of God’s compassion and note that he does not appear to Elijah in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the sound of a gentle breeze.

I sit before the Lord, calming my mind, and let the gentle breeze of his love surround me. I ask the Lord to be with me and remain silent in his presence.

I stay here for some time.

Before I end my prayer, I pray for all those searching for peace in their troubled lives.

I give thanks for all that I have received.

And I close my prayer asking the Lord to journey with me all day.

Gospel Matthew 14: 22–33

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. ‘It is a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, ‘Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.’ It was Peter who answered. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.’ ‘Come,’ said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. ‘Lord! Save me!’ he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. ‘Man of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’ And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. Those in the boat bowed down before him and said, ‘Truly, you are the Son of God’.

I come to my place of prayer and give thanks that I have this time, aware that I am following Jesus’s example of spending time alone with God.

I sit quietly, putting aside all other considerations, breathing in his love and goodness. I then read the text a few times.

Like Jesus, maybe I can see the disciples struggling in the heavy seas. Do I look on them with compassion, or am I in the boat with them, sharing their fear? What are my thoughts and feelings?

The disciples think Jesus is a ghost. In what ways am I sometimes fearful when I think God has deserted me?

Do I hesitate to call on his help? Why is that?

I may wish to ponder Peter’s story. I can admire his boldness and identify with his sudden fear. Does it speak to me of an incident in my life?

I share this with the Lord.

I may wish to ask the Lord to strengthen my belief that he is with me, with my community, with the Church at all times.

I end my prayer with a slow *Glory be* ...