

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

Let the people praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

Psalms

Thus says the Lord: Have a care for justice, act with integrity,
for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest.

First Reading

Almighty God, ever loving Father,
your care extends beyond the boundaries of race and nation
to the hearts of all who live.

May the walls, which prejudice raises between us,
crumble beneath the shadow of your outstretched arm.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
Isaiah 56: 1.6–7; Ps. 66 (67); Romans 11: 13–15.29–32; Matt. 15: 21–28

O God, be gracious and bless us,
and let your face shed its light upon us.

Psalms



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 20th August 2023

'My house will be called a house of
prayer for all peoples'

God's love, mercy and salvation are for everyone. Although the Israelites were known as God's chosen people, the story of their beginning, their time in exile, slavery and rejection is also a story of God's love for the whole of humanity. Each of our readings this Sunday approaches this truth from a different perspective.

The prophet Isaiah (**First Reading**) exhorts us to act with justice and integrity. He foresees a time when anyone who loves and follows the way of the Lord will be part of the salvation covenant.

The **Psalms** is a song of praise ringing with this truth, telling of a time when all nations will share in the loving light of God.

Paul, writing to the early Gentile church in Rome, describes his conviction that their personal conversion and belief in God will help to fulfil God's promise to bring salvation to everyone, and not just to the chosen people. (**Second Reading**)

Today's **Gospel** presents an uncharacteristically abrupt Jesus initially rejecting the pleas of a desperate Canaanite woman. And yet it is this woman's determined faith and sense of humour that challenges Jesus to step beyond the boundaries of his initial mission, thus revealing the truth that his salvation and healing is for all people – no exceptions.

Let us pray that we will be able to recognise and have the courage to respond to faith expressed in surprising places.

We ask too that we will each play our part in revealing God's love to the world.



Opening Prayer

O God, who have prepared for those who love you
good things which no eye can see,
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love,
so that, loving you in all things and above all things,
we may attain your promises,
which surpass every human desire.

Psalm 66 (67)

**R./ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.**

O God be gracious and bless us
and let your face shed its light upon us.
So will your ways be known upon earth
and all nations learn your saving help.

Let the nations be glad and exult
for you rule the world with justice.
With fairness your rule the peoples,
you guide the nations on earth.

Let the people praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
May God still give us his blessing
till the ends of the earth revere him.

I invite my mind and body to become still before the Lord.

I imagine seeing the Lord delighting and smiling upon me as I take this time to come to prayer today.

Bathed in the light of the Lord, I slowly read through each line and phrase of the psalm.

Perhaps I allow one or two words or images from the psalm to become the main focus of my prayer. I centre my attention on them.

I share with the Lord why this part of the psalm is important for me today.

In attentive silence, I listen to the Lord speaking to my heart, and see the Lord gazing upon me with love.

I close my prayer with my own words of praise and gratitude.

Gospel Matthew 15: 21–28

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, ‘Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.’ But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. ‘Give her what she wants,’ they said, ‘because she is shouting after us.’ He said in reply, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.’ But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. ‘Lord,’ she said, ‘help me.’ He replied, ‘It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the house-dogs.’ She retorted, ‘Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master’s table.’ Then Jesus answered her, ‘Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.’ And from that moment her daughter was well again.

As I settle to pray, I reflect back on how my day or week has been. What needs do I have that I want to place before the Lord?

Gently I become still as I prepare to read slowly through the Gospel text. After reading the passage a few times, I may like to imagine myself as a bystander, witnessing Jesus as a stranger coming to my town.

What do I see and hear? What do I notice about how Jesus and his disciples relate to this woman who is treated with disdain and rejection?

How would I feel in her shoes, hoping desperately for help for my child?

How do I feel when I see her pleading on her knees and being dismissed by Jesus? Am I shocked by his initial hurtful response?

I ponder whether I myself or my faith community ever reject people in need.

Do I ever notice faithfulness and the love of God expressed in people of other faiths, or of none? How do I respond to that?

I share my pondering with the Lord, and imagine praying with him, ‘Our Father ...’