

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

I will bless your name forever, O God my King. *Psalm*

As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. *Psalm*

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others. *Second Reading*

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
You have the message of eternal life. *Gospel Acclamation*

Almighty God,
our creator and guide,
may we serve you with all our heart
and know your forgiveness in our lives.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Ecclus. 27: 30-28: 7; Ps. 102 (103); Romans 14: 7-9; Matthew 18: 21-35

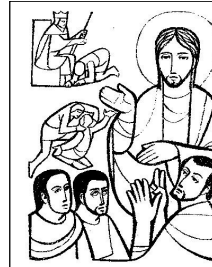
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The
Lord is
compassion
and love

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 17th September 2023

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy

The readings for this Sunday remind us again of God's boundless love and compassion. God's unconditional love for us, and the sacrifice of Jesus's death, mean there is no limit to the mercy we receive; nor can there be to the compassion and forgiveness we show to others.

The **First Reading** from Ecclesiasticus exhorts us to avoid resentment, anger and hatred, and live by God's commandments. Showing true forgiveness and having compassion for others, whatever the hurt we have experienced ourselves, will set us free.

The **Psalm** is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. We are reminded that we are not treated according to our sins: *we receive* the unimaginable depth and breadth of God's love and forgiveness.

In the **Second Reading**, St Paul teaches the Romans how the life we live influences those around us. We belong to Christ, Lord of the dead and the living, and it is through the way we live and die that we lead others to him.

The **Gospel** parable of the merciful king and his unforgiving servant reiterates the key message that we must love and forgive others because of the love and compassion God has shown us, in spite of the depth of our sins.

This week, perhaps we can pray for those who are unable to forgive. We think of those who remain trapped in the cycles of bitterness and division, which in so many parts of the world, lead to violence and war.



Opening Prayer

Look upon us, O God,
Creator and ruler of all things,
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.

Psalm 102 (103)

R./ The Lord is compassion and love.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults.

As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.
As a father has compassion on his children,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him.

Coming to the place where I will pray today, I take time to become aware of how things are for me. I devote time to slowing down by taking a few deep, mindful breaths, drawing in God's loving welcome.

When I am ready, I read through the words of the Psalm, slowly and purposefully. I notice where my attention is drawn, and I ponder ...

As I look back over my memories of God's compassion and love for me, perhaps particular times stand out?

In what ways have I known forgiveness, healing, redemption ...?

What about today?

What does it mean to me now to be 'crowned with love and compassion'?

Perhaps I now see more clearly the blessings I have received from the Lord. I take time to look at the ways in which I give thanks and praise through my life. What help might I need from the Lord?

I share what is in my heart, and I listen.

As I draw my prayer to a close, I take time to repeat as a mantra the phrase from the Psalm that speaks to me most.

Gospel Matthew 18: 21–35

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. 'Give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay the whole sum.' And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. 'Pay what you owe me,' he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, 'Give me time and I will pay you'. But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?' And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

I read the Gospel through slowly. I notice what thoughts and feelings the words evoke in me.

Would I be most likely to show the compassion of the king if this were me, or would I let anger and bitterness of the servant dominate?

Maybe I've struggled to forgive? I ask the Lord to help me find the strength to let go, and free myself from the resentment and hurt.

I look back on the times in my life when I'd been in the wrong and was forgiven. How would I describe the feelings I now recall? Joy? Lightness? Relief...? or...?

Perhaps it's myself I need to forgive? Opening my heart, I ask the Lord to help me with this, and to teach me how to show the same compassion that he does.

I place myself at the feet of the Lord, and thank him for the gift of his presence, using whatever words feel best.