

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

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

Psalm

Open our hearts, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son.

Gospel Acclamation

Father, guide us, as you guide creation
according to your law of love.

May we love one another
and come to perfection
in the eternal life prepared for us.

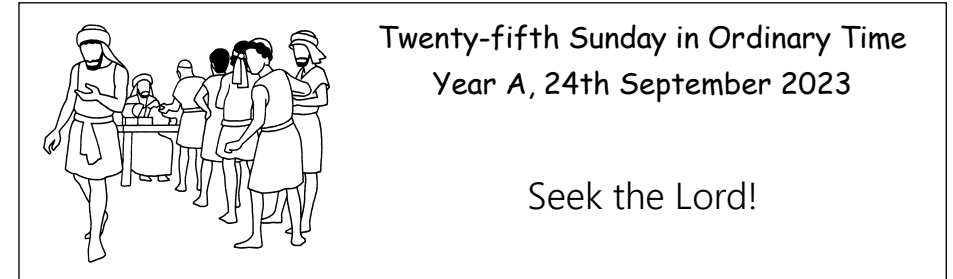
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Isaiah 55: 6–9; Psalm 144 (145); Philippians 1: 20–24, 27; Matthew 20: 1–16



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



The generous love of the Lord is very close to us. The readings for this Sunday remind us that when we seek the Lord, we can be confident of receiving a warm, forgiving welcome – no matter who we are.

The prophet Isaiah (**First Reading**) invites us to seek and find the Lord who is near to us. When we do this, God will embrace us with a rich forgiveness.

The **Psalm** is a blessing song of wonder and awe to the Lord who is close to us, full of compassion, abounding in love and kindness.

St Paul's letter to the Philippians (**Second Reading**) is written by one who is confident of the closeness of Christ. We, too, are encouraged to focus our lives on the Gospel values of Christ.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard (**Gospel**) presents an encouraging, if challenging, image of the generosity of God. We are invited to accept this generosity for ourselves and express it towards others. If this seems too hard for us to comprehend, let us take heart that the ways of the Lord are very different from our own ways.

The words of Scripture reassure us that we need not worry, for the Lord is near to us, ever present. Our God is full of compassion and forgiveness, willing us to seek him out. Let us pray that the whole Christian community will be inspired always to seek the Lord. Together as the body of Christ, we can transform the world with the justice and generosity of God.



Opening Prayer

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbour,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.

First Reading Isaiah 55: 6–9

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
Call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked abandon their way,
the evil ones their thoughts.
Let them turn back to the Lord who will take pity on them,
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.
Yes, the heavens are as high above earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.

I guide myself to become still before the Lord in the way that I find most helpful.

When I am ready, I slowly read the first words of the passage as an invitation to prayer:

‘Seek the Lord while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near.’

I then prayerfully read the rest of this short extract.

If there are words or phrases that call upon my attention, I focus the gaze of my prayer upon these. It might help to repeat these phrases, allowing them to become the central focus of my prayer.

Perhaps I ponder on the ways in which I seek the Lord in my life.

Do I feel the nearness of the presence of the Lord?

Or maybe I feel far from the Lord, or lack confidence to call upon him?

I share my thoughts and feelings with the Lord.

The passage invites us to turn back to the Lord. Here we can accept the forgiveness and loving presence that the Lord wants us to embrace.

Is there anything that holds me back from this loving invitation?

Perhaps my own self-judgement and critical thoughts cause me to resist the Lord’s generous love? If so, I listen to God’s words:

‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways.’

When I am ready to close my prayer, I do so by expressing my own words of gratitude, and prayerfully make a slow sign of the cross.

Glory be to the Father ...

Gospel Matthew 20: 1–16 (shortened)

Jesus said to his disciples: “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, ‘You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.’ So they went. At about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more workers standing round, and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing idle all day?’ ‘Because no one hired us,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘You go into my vineyard too’. In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first.’ So those who were hired last came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but grumbled at the landowner. ‘The workers who came last have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day’s work in all the heat.’ He said, ‘My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous? Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.’”

Remembering that I am always in the presence of God, I invite my mind and body to become still.

I read the Gospel slowly several times. Then I imagine that I am hearing Jesus share this parable for the first time.

Am I challenged or encouraged by the generosity of the landowner?

Why is this?

What feelings arise within me?

Why does Jesus want to share this story with me, and what does he want me to learn from it?

What work am I being invited to do for the kingdom of heaven?

I share with Jesus all that I have been pondering, and listen to what he wants me to hear.

When I am ready, I pray *Our Father ...*