

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

O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you like a dry weary land without water. *Psalms*

Wisdom is bright and does not grow dim. By those who love her,
she is readily seen and found by those who look for her. *First Reading*

Stay awake and stand ready because you do not know the hour when the
Son of Man is coming. *Gospel Acclamation*

Almighty Father, strong is your justice and great is your mercy.
Protect us in the burdens and challenges of life.
Shield our minds from the distortion of pride
and enfold our desire with the beauty of truth.
Help us to become more aware of your loving design
so that we may more willingly give our lives in service to all.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Wisdom 6: 12–16; Ps. 62 (63); 1 Thessalonians 4: 13–18; Matthew 25: 1–13



'The bridegroom is here. Go out and meet him ...' Matthew 25: 6

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 12th November 2023

'He is here!'

Running throughout the readings this Sunday are themes of longing, seeking, and purposeful attentiveness. We are encouraged to remain alert to the presence of the Lord, who comes to us in every moment, and to be ready to welcome his second coming.

The **First Reading** describes how the spirit of Wisdom is eager to enter into our lives. She is always close by, sitting at our gates, waiting for us to greet her, so that she may richly bless our lives.

Today's **Psalms** is a joyful prayer of desire for the Lord. The love of the Lord is better than life itself, and those who seek the Lord will be filled forever, as with a banquet.

In the **Second Reading**, the Christian community is reassured that our hope in the resurrection is not in vain. The longing and desire that we feel for God will be fulfilled both in life and in death.

Jesus uses a cautionary yet humorous parable to stress the importance of remaining prepared and hopeful for the coming of the Lord into our lives (**Gospel**). We are all invited to the banquet of the Lord, and yet we can become complacent about the abundant richness that our faith can bring. God is here with us now, but sometimes we may not be ready or do not have the light to see his presence amongst us.

This week, let us pray for a spirit of hopeful, joyful longing for the Lord, so that we may be fully ready to greet him when he comes into our life. We also continue to pray for peace and justice across our suffering world.



Opening Prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
graciously keep from us all adversity,
so that, unhindered in mind and body alike,
we may pursue in freedom of heart
the things that are yours.

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 4: 13–18 (extract)

We want you to be quite certain, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him.

I begin my prayer by recalling words from this week's Psalm:

*In the shadow of your wings I rejoice,
my soul clings to you,
Your right hand holds me fast.*

I remind myself that I am forever safely held in the sheltering shadow of the Lord's wings. In the safety and sanctuary of his presence, I invite my body and my mind to become still.

In quietness, I rest within the loving gaze of the Lord.

When I am ready to pray, I slowly read this short passage of scripture. What am I stirred to notice here?

This letter to the Christian community of Thessalonica was written with a confident belief in the reality of resurrection. It addresses directly the concerns of those who grieve.

If I have ever experienced loss or grief, in what ways was I consoled?

By my beliefs, my family, my friends, my faith community ...?

What of my own concerns about death?

Am I confident in the promise of resurrection?

Still at rest within the sheltering presence of the Lord, I share with him all of my ponderings about the cycle of life and death, and life again ...

In silence and stillness, I listen with longing within his loving presence.

When I am ready to bring my prayer to a close, I express my own words of gratitude, and finish by making a slow sign of the cross.

Gospel Matthew 25: 1–13

Jesus told this parable to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible; the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, 'The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him.' At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out.' But they replied, 'There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and get some for yourselves.' They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us.' But he replied. 'I tell you solemnly, I do not know you.' So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour."

I take a couple of long, deep, stilling breaths and a few moments to settle and become still before the Lord.

I read the Gospel parable slowly a few times. Perhaps I imagine sitting amongst the first followers of Jesus, and hearing him tell this tale.

Why is Jesus making this important point about being properly prepared? What does this mean for me?

Perhaps I notice my mind focusing on worries about being excluded from the banquet. Am I able to see beyond this, to hear the wonderful invitation to live a full and rewarding life, always in the presence of the Lord?

Perhaps there are things that get in the way of my being fully attentive to the Lord's presence?

Whatever they may be, I share my thoughts and concerns freely with the Lord, knowing that he loves me unconditionally.

I close my prayer by saying together with Jesus, *Our Father ...*