

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

He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.

*Gospel Acclamation*

He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,  
gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast  
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

*First Reading*

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people.

*Psalms*

Father in heaven,  
the day draws near when the glory of your Son  
will make radiant the night of the waiting world.  
May the lure of greed not impede us from the joy  
which moves the hearts of those who seek him.  
May the darkness not blind us to the vision of wisdom  
which fills the minds of those who find him.

*Old Opening Prayer*

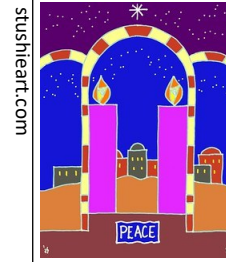
This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Isaiah 40: 1-5. 9-11; Psalm 84 (85); 2 Peter 3: 8-14; Mark 1: 1-8



'Prepare  
a way  
for  
the Lord!'

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**ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Second Sunday of Advent  
Year B, 10th December 2023

'Prepare a way for the Lord!'

Advent is a sacred time of longing and preparation for the Lord; a time for waking up to listen to the Spirit calling deep within us.

The words of Isaiah (**First Reading**) bring to this Sunday's liturgy a cry of consolation for a people desperate for peace. As we make a straight path to welcome the Lord into our lives, he gathers us up into his arms like a shepherd tenderly holding his lambs.

Our world is thirsting for this peace now, the deep peace that only Christ can bring. The **Psalms** is a prayer that speaks to the longing and yearning that is within us all.

Christ is not slow to respond to our desire for this peace. Peter's letter (**Second Reading**) to the early Christian community teaches that the Lord wants no one to be lost: he desires for all to be gathered unto himself. Since we do not know the time of the Lord's return, our prayerful preparations will draw us nearer to the peace that he promises.

The **Gospel** of Mark that we follow throughout this coming year begins the revelation of the Good News with that same call of the prophet Isaiah that began our readings: 'Prepare a way for the Lord'. John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness, calls us to repentance and renewal. He baptises with water, but tells of the time when we will be made new by the Holy Spirit.

Let us continue our Advent journey together, praying for this same spirit of renewal and preparation. Let us pray too for peace in our hearts, in our communities and especially in the Holy Land.



### Opening Prayer

Almighty and merciful God,  
may no earthly undertaking hinder those  
who set out in haste to meet your Son,  
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom  
gain us admittance to his company.

### First Reading Isaiah 40: 1–5, 9–11

‘Console my people, console them’, says your God.  
‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.’

A voice cries, ‘Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley, then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all shall see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’

Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion.  
Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem.  
Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, ‘Here is your God.’

Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

I come to my place of prayer and slowly gather myself into watchful stillness in the way that suits me best.

Once I feel prepared, I slowly read the words of the prophet, pausing, repeating and focusing my attention however I feel drawn.

I may choose to make these particular words, phrases or images the central focus of my prayer today, or I might dwell on the overall theme of preparation.

In what way might I make a straight path for the Lord in the wilderness of my inner being?

What do I need to raise up or level down in my life in order to be gathered into the arms of the Lord?

I imagine resting in those loving arms, and share with the Lord my deepest desire and longing. In silence, I wait upon the Lord and listen ...

When I am ready, I close my prayer with my own words of gratitude.

### Gospel Mark 1: 1–11

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;  
he will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.

And so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, ‘Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

I prepare myself to pray by slowly inviting my mind and body to settle and become still. It may help to light an Advent candle, or listen to an Advent carol to help me become still and ready to welcome the Lord in prayer.

When I feel ready, I turn to the Gospel text and read it slowly and lovingly.

I reread the text as many times as I need to, in order to let the Spirit guide me in my prayer.

Using my imagination, I create a picture in my mind of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness. What is it about him and his message that draws people out to listen to him?

John invites people to repent and be washed of their sins in the waters of the Jordan.

What do I need to seek forgiveness for?

Knowing that the Lord is loving and full of forgiveness, what do I desire to wash away in the waters of the river?

I imagine being free of all that holds me back from welcoming the Lord deeper into my life. How does this make me feel?

I pray that I will always desire what better leads to God’s deepening life in me. I close my time of prayer by saying ‘Our Father...’.