

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

My eyes are always on the Lord.

Entrance Antiphon

The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes.

Psalm

Blessed are they who dwell in your house,

For ever singing your praise.

Communion Antiphon

God of compassion, Father of all goodness,
to heal the wounds our sins and selfishness bring upon,
you bid us turn to fasting, prayer,
and sharing with our brothers and sisters.

We acknowledge our sinfulness and guilt is ever before us:
when our weakness causes discouragement,
let your compassion fill us with hope
and lead us through a Lent of repentance
to the beauty of Easter joy.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Exodus 20: 1-17; Psalm 18 (19); 1 Corinthians 1: 22-25; John 2: 13-25



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Third Sunday in Lent
Year B, 3rd March 2024

Christ, the power
and the wisdom of God

As we enter this third week of Lent, our readings remind us of God's love for us, soon to be witnessed in the suffering and death of Christ Jesus.

In the **First Reading**, God speaks to the people of Israel after their release from slavery in Egypt. The Ten Commandments show his people how to freely live in service of the One who has liberated them.

The **Psalm** speaks of the gifts the law of God brings in terms of wisdom, truth and life.

St Paul reflects on the way in which those who are called to follow Jesus see the crucified Christ. For those early Christians, and ourselves, this is not a sign of God's foolishness or weakness, but a demonstration to the world of God's power and wisdom. (**Second Reading**)

In this week's **Gospel**, we see Jesus sweep away the buyers and sellers from the Temple, which should be revered as the house of God. We are reminded that it is through Christ's suffering and death that salvation will come, and the power and wisdom of God will be revealed.

This week, perhaps we can pray for all those areas of the world where places of holiness and sanctuary are debased and de-valued. We pray too, for all people who are prevented from worshipping openly, and from practising their faith in freedom.



Opening Prayer

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Psalm 18 (19)

R./ You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey
than honey from the comb.

As I begin my time of prayer today, I settle my body and mind in whatever way works best for me.

If I can, I may like to read the Psalm out loud, feeling the rhythm of the words and their effects on me, and noticing any images they create for me. If something particularly strikes me, I stay with this, exploring it further, listening for what the Lord might be saying to me.

What comes to mind as I think of *law, precepts, commands, decrees*? Can I, like the psalmist, revel in the law of the Lord being *perfect, right, clear, holy, true* ...? Or are there perhaps aspects that I struggle with?

In what ways does my life reflect my beliefs and my love of God?

I talk to the Lord as a treasured friend.

As I draw my prayer to a close, perhaps I can recall times when I have experienced a revived soul, and a heart that is glad.

I end by thanking the Lord for his presence in my life, using the words that best express how I feel.

Gospel John 2: 13–25

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up'. The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about anyone; he could tell what a person had in them.

I take the time I need to become still. When I am ready, I read this familiar passage slowly, a couple of times, and then set the text aside and re-live the events in my imagination.

Perhaps I immerse myself in the clamour of the competing voices, the noises and smells of the animals, the brightly coloured robes of the Temple visitors, and the magnificence of the building itself.

How does the atmosphere change as Jesus enters?

What do I notice about him as he surveys the scene?

Disbelief ... distress... anger? What else ...? What is my own reaction as I watch Jesus charge through the crowd, brandishing the whip?

I move closer to hear what Jesus says to those who challenge him.

Perhaps I pause now, with hindsight, understanding what they do not.

What do I feel for Jesus now? What do I tell him?

As the sights and sounds fade away and I bring my prayer to a close, I let Jesus draw me close. He already knows what is in me, but nonetheless I perhaps pour out my deepest fears, desires, hopes and gratitude to this friend whom I can trust above all.