

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

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.

Psalm

See the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I shall
make a new covenant with the House of Israel. *First Reading*

If anyone serves me, says the Lord, they must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too. *Gospel acclamation*

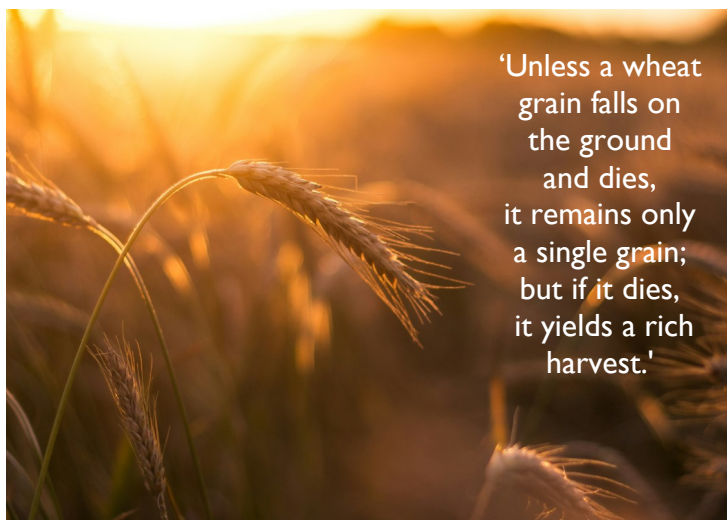
Father in heaven,
the love of your Son led him to accept the suffering of the cross
that his brothers and sisters might glory in new life.

Change our selfishness into self-giving.

Help us to embrace the world you have given us,
that we may transform the darkness of its pain
into the life and joy of Easter.

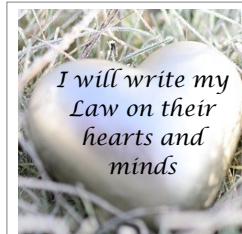
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Jeremiah 31: 31–34; Psalm 50 (51); Hebrews 5: 7–9; John 12: 20–33



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



**Fifth Sunday of Lent
Year B, 17th March 2024**

'I will write my Law on their hearts'

As Lent draws to a close, each Spring day is gradually suffused with increasing light. All around us, nature is waking up from the long darkness of winter. This Sunday's readings encourage us to stir from our own darkness and turn towards growth and transformation out of pain and suffering.

The prophet Jeremiah makes a great proclamation: 'See, the days are coming ... when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel'. God's eternal covenant of love and forgiveness is written deep within our hearts (**First Reading**).

It is because of this same promise, that Christ became human to share with us in our suffering, forever praying for us and with us (**Second Reading**). In Christ, all suffering and death are transfigured into growth and new life through his resurrection.

This Sunday's **Psalm** would have been familiar to Jesus as he prayed for us during his time on earth, earnestly encouraging us to turn from our sinful ways towards God's love and compassion.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus speaks of the personal suffering and death that he will soon be facing. He knows that he could ask his Father to save him from this fate, but instead he willingly makes a choice that leads to our salvation. Jesus invites us to follow his way of living. It is not an easy path to travel, but Christ is always with us, helping and sustaining us. Let us pray for each other that through God's infinite grace, we will remain true to the law of love that is written deep within us.



Opening Prayer

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.

Psalm 50 (51)

R./ A pure heart create for me, O God.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.

I come with an open heart to my place of prayer. Perhaps this is a special place in my home, or maybe I am walking outside, aware of the presence of God in nature. Wherever I am, I take a few moments to reflect over these last few weeks of Lent.

When have I noticed the Lord's presence within and around me during this special time? Is there anything I feel I need as I come to prayer today?

Holding all of this in mind, I allow my whole being to settle into silence before the Lord. I take a few deep, steadying breaths ... and slowly, prayerfully, read through the psalm. I read it again and again.

I allow the Holy Spirit to guide the focus of my prayer.

Perhaps I centre my prayer on one or two words or phrases, and let those be the sole focus of my time with the Lord.

Then I share with him why these words were so important to me today.

Alternatively, my prayer could focus on the mood and emotion of the psalm: the need for forgiveness, for compassion, for steadfastness; the need for joy, to feel close to God, and to be sustained by God's love.

I bring all of this before the Lord, and in my own words or those of the psalmist, I close my prayer by asking for whatever grace I desire.

Gospel John 12: 20–30 (abbreviated)

Jesus replied: 'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves their life loses it; anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, they must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour them. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!'

A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' Jesus said, 'Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself.'

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

Having found the way that works best for me to become still before the Lord, I read the Gospel passage in a slow and prayerfully loving way.

Next week, we will enter Holy Week and hear the great Passion of our Lord read out in church on Palm Sunday.

In today's Gospel, Jesus seems to comprehend some of the awful things that will soon be happening to him. He is also passing on some crucial teaching to us.

What words of Jesus am I drawn to in this scene?

Why are these particular words and phrases important to me today?

Perhaps I imagine following Jesus through his final days on earth.

Do I understand his challenging teaching? What can he possibly mean? If I have questions, fears or doubts, I may like to share these with Jesus.

Maybe I notice Jesus's anguish. How does this make me feel?

I consider whether I have all that I need to be able to remain alongside Jesus, just like a close and loving servant.

I share all that has arisen during this time of prayer with Jesus, and I ask our Father for the grace, strength and commitment to follow Jesus always.