

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

You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires. *Psalm*

Bear with one another charitably,
in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. *Second Reading*

Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who
were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as
much as was wanted. *Gospel*

God our Father, open our eyes to see your hand at work
in the splendour of creation, in the beauty of human life.

Touched by your hand our world is holy.

Help us cherish the gifts that surround us,
to share your blessings with our brothers and sisters,
and to experience the joy of life in your presence.

Old Opening Prayer

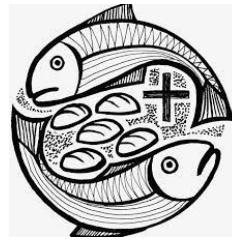
This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
2 Kings 4: 42-44; Psalm 144 (145); Ephesians 4: 1-6; John 6: 1-15



'There is a small boy here
with five barley loaves
and two fish;
but what is that
between so many?'

If you'd like to receive Prego by email each week, sign up at
www.stbeunosoutreach.wordpress.com

ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year B, 28th July 2024

'Pick up the pieces left over,
so that nothing gets wasted'

The readings this week focus on the generosity of the Lord who
feeds his children 'till they want no more', both physically and
spiritually.

In the **First Reading**, Elisha, the man of God, feeds a hundred people
with only twenty barley loaves. Despite the misgivings of Elisha's
servant, everyone is fed and there are some left over.

This story is of course the precursor of the feeding of the five
thousand, which is today's **Gospel**. Despite Philip and Andrew's
doubts, five loaves and two fish feed everyone, and yet twelve
baskets are still left over.

The **Psalm** continues the same theme of God feeding his creatures,
using the image of God opening his hands to give his people the
spiritual or physical food they desire.

In the **Second Reading**, Paul reminds us that we must preserve unity
and peace as we are all part of one Body, sustained by one faith in
God the Father of all.

This week then, I might pray that all those who hunger for food and
for God may be satisfied. I also ask the Lord to help me
give generously when I come across people in need, and
to find ways of working towards greater unity and peace.



Opening Prayer

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.

Second Reading Ephesians 4: 1–6

In Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, through all and within all.

Before I start my prayer today, I try to put aside my concerns and worries; my 'to do' list, and all I carry within me. To help me, perhaps I take a couple of deep breaths and then breathe normally, noticing the gentle rhythm of air flowing through my lungs, giving me life.

What are you going to show me today Lord?

When I am ready, I read these lines from St Paul several times, so they become really familiar. I imagine him in his prison, writing to me, encouraging me to become more charitable, selfless, gentle and patient.

How does that make me feel? Challenged, despondent, depressed?

Or maybe I can't but smile as I realise how well Paul knows me, how much I am in need of his encouragement?

I pause and ponder. Perhaps I remember times when I sorely lacked these qualities, and what happened then.

However, I am only one person among many others, all very diverse. How do I respond to these others? Do their race, colour, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, or religion matter to me? I spend a few moments reflecting on the way I feel about this.

Perhaps I am drawn back to the text, and to Paul's appeal to unity and peace, regardless of our diversity. Do I have a problem with any of the elements that unite us all?

'One Body, one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.'

I turn to the Lord and tell him how I feel. I speak freely about what is in my heart, trusting that he knows and understands me.

Finally, as I conclude my prayer, I may want to speak with Paul and share with him, if I can, how grateful I am to him for helping me to reflect on what I need to do to 'lead a life worthy of [my] vocation' ... and to do that 'In the name of the Father...'

Gospel John 6: 1–15

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.'

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough, he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

If I can, I might choose to pray this well-known passage on an empty stomach, so I find it easier to imagine the scene and the way people felt.

But first, I come to quiet, shutting out noises far and near in the way that works best for me.

Reading the text reflectively, I try to put myself in the scene. I may be an onlooker or one of the main characters, or even move from one to the other. Where does my interest rest?

Perhaps I simply hear snatches of phrases from the crowd, families with small children: 'I am hungry' or 'When are we going to eat, I want to go home!' Or I may focus on this one little boy offering his loaves and fish.

What comes to my mind?

As I watch the scene unfold, I may contrast the practical concerns of the disciples with the quiet authority of Jesus. How does this resonate within me?

I reflect on today's world: so many people living in famine-stricken areas; so much food wasted in wealthier countries. In practical terms, what can I do to help those who are hungry – both for food, and for God?

Before closing my prayer, I ask Jesus to show me how I can use what I have, so that 'nothing gets wasted'.