

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

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of mercy to those who call to you.

Entrance Antiphon

Lord, who shall dwell on your holy mountain?
Those who walk without faults, act with justice,
and speak the truth from their heart.

Psalm

You must do what the word tells you, not just listen to it and
deceive yourself.

Second Reading

Almighty God, every good thing comes from you.
Fill our hearts with love for you,
increase our faith,
and by your constant care
protect the good you have given us.

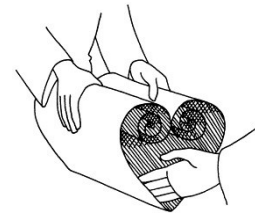
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Deut 4: 1-2,6-8; Ps 14 (15); James 1:17-18,21-22, 27; Mk 7:1-8,14-15,21-23



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year B, 1st September 2024

You must do
what the word tells you

Our readings this week challenge us to reflect on how much the
word of God influences the way we live our lives.

In the **First Reading**, Moses explains to the people that it is by
obeying the laws given to them in the commandments that they
will have life in the land promised to them by the Lord.

We, like the Jewish Christians who first heard the words of the
letter of James (**Second Reading**), must not only *listen* to the
word, but also *do* what the word tells us, by caring for those in
need, and living good and honest lives.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus describes the lip-service of the Pharisees,
who, as foretold in the words of Isaiah, offer 'worthless worship'.
Their adherence to human traditions and values takes their hearts
far from God.

This week we may want to spend time considering how closely our
lives reflect what God asks of us, and in what ways – adapting the
words of the **Psalm** – we walk without fault, act with justice and
speak truth from the heart.

Chosen to be the children of God, we pray for the grace,
strength and courage to live according to the message of
the truth we have received through the teaching of Jesus.



Opening Prayer

God of might, giver of every good gift.
put into our hearts the love of your name,
so that, by deepening our sense of reverence,
you may nurture in us what is good,
and, by your watchful care,
keep safe what you have nurtured.

Second Reading James 1: 17–18, 21–22, 27

It is all that is good, everything that is perfect, which is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light; with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow of a change. By his own choice he made us his children by the message of the truth so that we should be a sort of first-fruits of all that he had created.

Accept and submit to the word which has been planted in you and can save your souls. But you must do what the word tells you, and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves.

Pure unspoilt religion, in the eyes of God our Father is this: coming to the help of orphans and widows when they need it, and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world.

To prepare myself for prayer, I take time to settle in whatever way will work best for me today. As far as I can, I set aside any cares and concerns that are weighing on me. I pause for a while to consider what I want to ask of the Lord for this time.

When I am ready, I slowly read the text.

Perhaps I am drawn to look at my life, and thank the Lord for all the good things I am blessed with. This may include my family, my friends, my purpose in life, the community to which I belong ... or ...?

If I find it hard to see my life like this, perhaps I can simply turn to the Lord and tell him how I feel, trusting he is beside me, even though I might struggle to see it just now.

Returning to the text again, how do I respond to the call to *accept and submit to the word*?

Am I relaxed about this, or maybe I feel challenged ... uneasy ...?

Maybe I recognise that there are parts of my life where I am deceiving myself. Perhaps there are issues that I am not facing up to: calls from the Lord that I am resisting? Maybe I am allowing something else to displace God from being at the centre of my life?

I talk to the Lord, who, despite my failings, loves me exactly as I am, and I ask for the help to see where I may need to change.

As I draw my prayer to a close, I thank the Lord for this time with him.

Perhaps, with St Ignatius, I can pray ever more deeply:

I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me.

Gospel Mark 7: 1–8, 14–15, 21–23

The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. For the Pharisees, and the Jews in general, follow the tradition of the elders and never eat without washing their arms as far as the elbow; and on returning from the market place they never eat without first sprinkling themselves. There are also many other observances which have been handed down to them concerning the washing of cups and pots and bronze dishes. So the Pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean hands?' He answered, 'It was of you hypocrites that Isaiah so rightly prophesied in this passage of scripture: "This people honours me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless, the doctrines they teach are only human regulations." You put aside the commandment of God to cling to human traditions.' He called the people to him again and said, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that goes into you from outside can make you unclean. For it is from within, from your hearts, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within and make you unclean.'

As I settle to pray, I pause, and become aware of God's loving gaze on me.

As I read the words of the Gospel, I might find it helpful to put myself in the place of the Pharisees first. Are there times or situations where I stand in judgement about how things 'ought' to be done?

Perhaps there are traditions I am clinging to at the expense of really listening to, and answering, God's call?

I read the text again, and this time, see myself as a disciple. What have I learnt from Jesus? In what ways do I now honour God? Where is my heart?

Reading again, I may be struck by something in the *evil intentions* Jesus speaks of. I invite him to be beside me as I ponder. What might he want to say to me as he looks at my life?

Perhaps with his compassionate help, I can see what he sees – both the best and the worst of me – and I end with a prayer of deep gratitude for the forgiveness and the loving mercy I trust will be mine.