

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

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down.
It is the Lord who loves the just,
the Lord, who protects the stranger.

Psalms

How happy the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Gospel Acclamation

Almighty Father,
strong is your justice and great is your mercy.
Protect us in the burdens and challenges of life.
Shield our minds from the distortion of pride
and enfold our desire with the beauty of truth.
Help us to become more aware of your loving design
so that we may more willingly give our lives in service to all.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
1 Kings 17: 10–16; Psalm 145 (146); Hebrews 9: 24–28; Mark 12: 38–44

My soul, give praise to the Lord!

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time,
Year B, 10th November 2024

'The Lord will reign for ever!'

The reign of the Lord glorified in today's Psalm is a kingdom of justice for the oppressed. The other readings, too, all focus on God's loving concern for the poor, the weak and the powerless.

In the **First Reading**, a destitute Gentile widow gives to Elijah all that she has left in the world, when he asks for help. Though she herself is not one of the people of Israel, her generous self-giving is rewarded by a miraculous multiplication of her tiny supply of flour and oil.

The **Psalm** continues this theme, celebrating God's eternal faithfulness and loving care to those who are vulnerable, bowed down and hungry.

By way of introduction to today's Gospel scene, which takes place outside the Temple in Jerusalem, the **Second Reading** explains that the death and resurrection of Jesus have done away once and for all with Temple offerings and sacrifices for sin.

As Jesus sits outside the Temple treasury (**Gospel**), he teaches his disciples to be wary of people like the scribes, who flaunt their privilege and entitlement in public places. The rich and powerful have a false sense of their own importance. In contrast, Jesus honours the humble actions of another poor widow passing by. Although she only gives a tiny amount to the Temple, her contribution is all the more generous because she is offering all that she has to the Lord. It is her example that we are asked to follow.

Let us pray this week for a generous and loving heart. May we never be afraid to give of ourselves to the Lord, so that we may bring about his Kingdom of love in the world today.



Opening Prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
graciously keep from us all adversity,
so that, unhindered in mind and body alike,
we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours.

First Reading 1 Kings 17: 10–16

Elijah the Prophet went off to Sidon. And when he reached the city gate, there was a widow gathering sticks; addressing her he said, ‘Please bring a little water in a vessel for me to drink.’ She was setting off to bring it when he called after her. ‘Please,’ he said, ‘bring me a scrap of bread in your hand.’ ‘As the Lord your God lives,’ she replied, ‘I have no baked bread, but only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug; I am just gathering a stick or two to go and prepare this for myself and my son to eat, and then we shall die.’

But Elijah said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, go and do as you have said; but first make a little scone of it for me and bring it to me, and then make some for yourself and your son. For thus the Lord speaks, the God of Israel: “Jar of meal shall not be spent, jug of oil shall not be emptied before the day when the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.”’ The woman went and did as Elijah told her and they ate the food, she, himself and her son. The jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied, just as the Lord had foretold through Elijah.

After taking my time to become still and peaceful before God, I ask for the grace to hear the Lord guide me in my time of prayer.

Then I read through the Scripture slowly and reverently. I use my imagination to picture the scene unfolding, perhaps as if I were a bystander.

I try to get a sense of each character in the story and their own needs and motivations. Why is it this particular woman that Elijah approaches?

What must she be thinking when he greets her?

The woman and her son have so little to eat: she expects to die from hunger, yet does not hesitate to offer hospitality to a stranger. Could I do the same?

Have I ever witnessed or even received such self-giving hospitality?

Elijah approaches this Gentile woman in a foreign land. Jesus, in his own ministry (Luke 4: 26), will later highlight the importance of their meeting as evidence that God’s generous love is for all people, and not just a chosen few.

Who are the poor and oppressed people outside the ‘borders’ of my own faith community, who are in need of God’s generosity? Who will reach out to them?

Is it possible that I am being asked to help in some way?

How might I respond to their needs?

Knowing that this story was important to Jesus, I speak to him as if to a friend.

I share with him all that has arisen during my time of prayer. Then I listen.

When I am ready, I finish my prayer by praying *Our Father* ...

Gospel Mark 12: 38–44

In his teaching Jesus said, ‘Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the people who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.’

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, ‘I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.’

I come to my time and place of prayer, remembering that I am always in the presence of the Lord. In that presence, I gradually find a point of stillness within myself, in the way that works best for me. Perhaps I listen to some prayerful music or focus on a lighted candle.

Once I feel ready, I turn to the Gospel. I read it as many times as I need, in order for the scene to become familiar to me. Is there something new that I notice as I come to pray with this text today?

It may help my prayer if I not only envisage the scene playing out before me, but also imagine myself as one of Jesus’s disciples.

I hear Jesus speak about the scribes, criticising their behaviour.

How do I react to the way he relates to these people of religious influence and importance? Perhaps I am shocked? pleased ...?

Have I ever found myself behaving like the scribes?

Jesus asks me to witness the generosity of the widow in contrast to the offerings of the rich people in the Temple. Widows had very little status in Jewish society at that time: why might Jesus focus on them?

Who are those on whom our society looks down today?

Do I tend to pay more attention to the rich and the ‘scribes’ around me, or to the weak and powerless in our world?

Again I ponder my response to this Gospel teaching.

How is Jesus guiding me now? Once more I listen, and when I am ready, I close my prayer by making the sign of the cross.