

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

He will tend his flock like a shepherd.

First Reading

Bless the Lord, O my soul! My God, how great you are!

Psalm

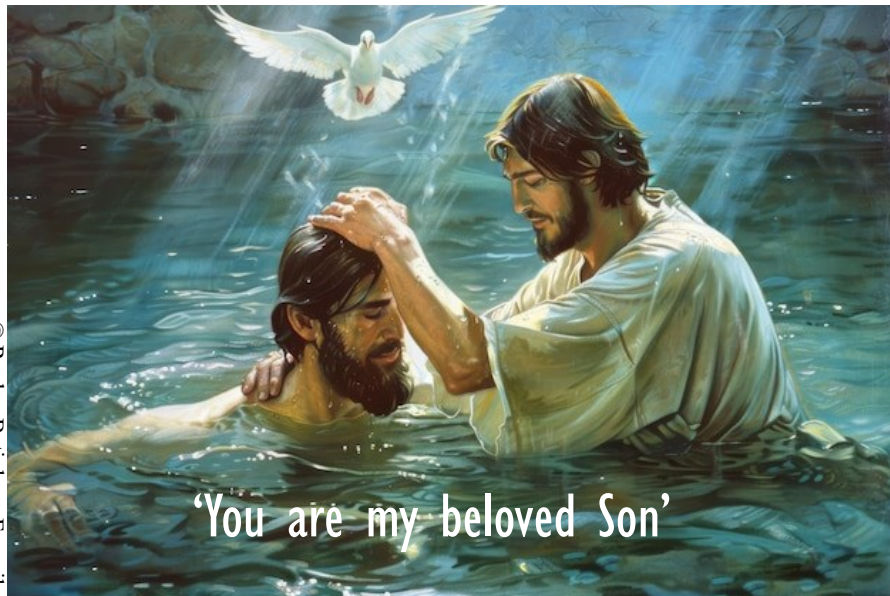
'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Gospel

Almighty, eternal God,
when the Spirit descended upon Jesus
at his baptism in the Jordan,
you revealed him as your own beloved Son.
Keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit,
faithful to your calling.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Is. 40:1-5, 9-11; Ps. 103 (104); Titus 2:11-14, 3: 4-7; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22



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'You are my beloved Son'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Baptism of the Lord
Year C, 12th January 2025

'Here is my servant
whom I uphold'

With the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we reach the end of Christmastide, and the Gospel readings begin to follow Jesus in his teaching and public mission. This feast is another 'epiphany': a manifestation of God as Father, Son and Spirit.

The **First Reading** from Isaiah is joyous. God will save his people. Like a shepherd he will care for them, and bring them home from exile.

The **Psalm** is a prayer of praise to the God of creation, who nourishes his people and pours forth his Spirit upon them.

In the **Second Reading** we are told that we have been saved through rebirth in water and the Spirit: not through any merit of our own, but thanks to the loving kindness of our God.

In the **Gospel** we hear God's voice proclaiming Jesus as his beloved Son, and the Spirit descends upon him as he is baptised by John.

As Pilgrims of Hope in this **Jubilee year**, let us consider the glories of our universe, created through and for Christ, who brings all things to perfection. Perhaps pondering on the waters of baptism will lead us to a greater and deeper appreciation of this wonderful element, and encourage us to help and pray for those deprived of life-giving water.



Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan
and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.

Second Reading Titus 2: 11–14, 3: 4–7

Beloved: The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

I begin my prayer as usual, becoming aware of being in God's presence and allowing other concerns to be put aside. I breathe deeply and relax into this presence.

I read the text slowly a couple of times.

We are encouraged to live a godly life while waiting in hope for Christ the Redeemer to appear. How do I react to these words?

In what way has my prayer during Advent and Christmas deepened my desire to meet Christ?

How do I accept this priceless gift of redemption from God's loving kindness?

Through God's mercy I have been united with Christ at my own baptism. How does this '*washing of regeneration*' affect my daily life?

I speak to the Lord and listen to see what arises in my heart.

Christ's coming means '*salvation to all people*', whether they are baptised or not. I turn to consider all those I meet, and also all suffering humanity.

I pray that they may come to know the riches of God's grace.

I finish with '*Glory be ...*'

Gospel Luke 3: 15–16, 21–22

At that time: As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, 'I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Now when all the people were baptised by John the Baptist and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

As I come to pray, I begin by taking the time to still my mind and body. I consider how I feel. Am I relaxed or tense? At peace or anxious?

However I feel, I turn to the Lord and offer this time of prayer, asking him to send me his Spirit to pray within me. I rest in his presence.

When I am ready, I read the text slowly.

At the beginning of this year, which is also a Jubilee year, do I have a feeling of expectation? In what way?

I note John the Baptist. He speaks simply. What do his words mean to me? Are there others who point out Jesus for me?

I consider Jesus, who comes quietly at the end of the queue. This is a deeply personal experience for him. As I see the scene unfold, I ponder:

Can I relate this to my life? Maybe an experience, a moment of prayer when I felt a glimpse of heaven?

Or the grace of utter conviction in God's love for me?

I reflect on such things, and speak to the Lord from my heart.

Confirmed by his Father's words, and filled with the Spirit, Jesus enters his public ministry.

Perhaps I can turn to God with gratitude for the times I have heard his voice in different ways, and for the times he has sent his Spirit to encourage me.

I end my prayer with a slow *Our Father*.