

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

The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds.

First Reading

The Lord stood by me and strengthened me.

Second Reading

'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

Gospel

Almighty and ever-living God,
strengthen our faith, hope and love.
May we do with loving hearts what you ask of us
and come to share the life you promise.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Sirach 35: 15b–17, 20–22b; Ps. 33 (34); 2 Tim. 4: 6–8, 16–18; Luke 18: 9–14

James Tissot, *The Pharisee and the Publican* (1886–94)



'The Lord
is close
to the
broken-
hearted'

Psalms

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

Reconciliation (Coventry Cathedral)



PREGO LEAFLET

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C, 26th October 2025

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

As we approach the end of the Church year, we are reminded that God's way is one of humility, equality and perseverance in the pursuit of love.

The **First Reading** emphasises the Lord's focus on the needs of the poor and the marginalised. God calls us to be persistent in our prayer and uncompromising in our quest for justice.

This theme is continued in the **Psalms**, which reminds us that the Lord always hears our prayers of pain and distress, and responds to petitions that seek to do good in the world.

The letter to Timothy reflects on the writer's own ministry as a lesson to other followers of Christ (**Second Reading**). He encourages us to stand strong in the face of suffering, criticism and rejection, and to remain fixed on what is right and loving in the eyes of the Lord.

Jesus (**Gospel**) offers a sobering illustration of the difference between what we in society uphold as noble, righteous and honourable, and the values of the Lord. God always sees through status and superficial expressions of faith, and reminds us that we are all loved sinners.

As **Pilgrims of Hope** in this Jubilee year, we renew our commitment to sharing God's compassion and care for all. We strive for peace and justice in this world by reflecting on our own behaviour. We are reminded that we cannot do this on our own, but must constantly seek the Lord's loving guidance and strength.



Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.

Second Reading 2 Timothy 4: 6–8, 16–18

Beloved: I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I find a quiet place and take as long as I need to settle down and set aside whatever might be whirling around in my mind. I become aware that the Lord is very close and understands me through and through.

I imagine how I would feel receiving this letter. I read it slowly, taking on board the writer's reflections as he nears the end of his earthly life.

I dwell for a while on the relevance of these words to my own life.

Perhaps there are things that haven't worked out as I'd planned or hoped. My actions may have brought criticism or judgment from others.

I confide in the Lord my feelings about those experiences, and other people's reactions.

I pray that I may let go of any sense of shame, regret or bitterness.

I focus instead on the opportunities any suffering brings for new learning and growth.

I may feel drawn to recall when and how the Lord made himself known to me in my struggles.

I consider how I might pass his love, compassion and encouragement onto others, even those whose politics, values or lifestyle may be radically different from my own.

When I am ready, I end with a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord who, even in my darkest hours and feelings of weakness, will forever stand by me.

Gospel Luke 18: 9–14

At that time: Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

I come to my place of prayer. I consciously draw my attention away from my thoughts and open my heart to whatever the Lord wants to reveal to me. It may help to take a few slow breaths.

I take in this familiar text and imagine the audience that Jesus is addressing. I gently observe their different reactions to his directness.

Perhaps I place myself in the position of either the Pharisee or the tax collector. Are there aspects of my life in which I can relate to both?

I take all the time I need to reflect on instances where, like the Pharisee, I may have been complacent, self satisfied or judgmental of others.

To what extent has my prayer been more of a transaction than a genuine attempt to examine my conscience and draw closer to God?

If I feel so drawn, I ponder how readily I, like the tax collector, confront my own sinfulness and seek forgiveness from the Lord who loves me unconditionally.

I may notice that the Pharisee prays to himself rather than to God. I reflect on times when I rely on my own wisdom rather than praying to the Lord.

Slowly, I hand over to the Lord all that has come to the surface, in humility and trust.

I end my prayer with an *Our Father* ... dwelling in particular on the plea to 'forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.'