

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

Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God will come!'

First Reading

Come Lord and save us.

Psalms

Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord

Second Reading

Are you the one who is to come?

Gospel

Lord God, may we, your people,
who look forward to the birthday of Christ
experience the joy of salvation
and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Isaiah 35: 1–6.10; Psalm 145 (146); James 5: 7–10; Matthew 11: 2–11



Christ with John the Baptist
Icon of the Deesis (detail), Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (mosaic, 1260s)

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

PREGO LEAFLET

Third Sunday of Advent,
'Gaudete' Sunday
Year A, 14th December 2025

The desert shall rejoice,
and blossom abundantly



The readings of this *Gaudete* ('rejoice') Sunday are full of hopeful joy in anticipation of Christ's arrival.

This will bring an end to all sorrow and mourning (**First Reading**), because through Christ will come salvation and new life (**Psalms**).

In the **Second Reading**, St James calls us to be ready for this arrival. The Lord is near, but to perceive the signs of his coming requires from us both patience and openness of eyes and ears (**Gospel**).

On this third Sunday of Advent and during this coming week, let us imitate the desert coming to bloom. By eagerly receiving the Lord's lifegiving and transformational grace, we will have the strength and courage to blossom abundantly in all the areas of our life.

As **Pilgrims of Hope** towards the close of this Jubilee Year, we pray to be bringers of joy, life and consolation to those who are feeling bowed down by the burdens of life.



Opening Prayer

O God, who see how your people
faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity,
enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation
and to celebrate them always
with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.

First Reading Isaiah 35: 1–6a, 10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, ‘Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.’

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

As always, I come to this time of prayer attentively, gently, deliberately.

I acknowledge how I am feeling ... perhaps on occasion a little weak and feeble, perhaps conscious of what I might be carrying with me today.

However, I allow myself to settle and, gradually, to become still.

I ask for the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

I slowly read the text, more than once. Then I allow the words to settle in me. What I am noticing? I stay with what is drawing my attention, only moving on when ready.

I might ponder one or more of the following questions ...

If life is feeling barren or a little dry for me at the moment, to where am I being invited to look for greater life and joy?

If my heart feels anxious, does reflecting on today’s scripture give me some consolation?

In what ways might I blossom as I continue my journey toward Christmas?

How, by way of response, might I share that life with others?

I end, when ready, by slowly saying, *Glory be* ...

Gospel Matthew 11: 2–11

At that time: When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’ And Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.’ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ‘What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” ‘Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.’

Before looking at the Gospel text, I give a few moments to allow myself to come into the quiet. I acknowledge my own unworthiness, but also Jesus’s desire to enter into relationship with me.

I slowly read the Gospel a couple of times and ponder its rich imagery. What is striking me, moving me, challenging me?

If helpful I ask myself, what are my own expectations of ‘the Christ’?

Am I looking in the right places, among the right people?

Am I sometimes left disappointed?

Am I limited by my own preconceptions and doubts?

Through the Gospel Jesus is asking me to see and hear the signs.

What signs is he giving me and how open am I to receiving them?

How am I being blessed by him?

What is he expecting of his messenger?

With Jesus at my side, I ponder these questions.

I end by thinking of how I might prepare the way for him in my own time and place.

When ready to leave, I make a slow sign of the cross.