

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

O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me!

Entrance Antiphon

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.

First Reading

The Lord is close to all who call him, who call on him in truth. *Psalm*

God our Father,
gifts without measure flow from your goodness
to bring us your peace.
Our life is your gift.
Guide our life's journey,
for only your love makes us whole.
Keep us strong in your love.

Old Opening Prayer

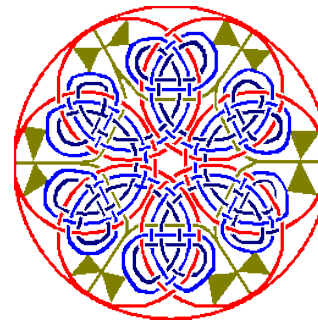
This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Isaiah 55: 1–3; Psalm 144 (145); Romans 8: 35, 37–39; Matthew 14: 13–21



‘We have only five loaves here and two fish ...’

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



PREGO LEAFLET

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 2nd August 2026

‘Nothing will be able to separate us
from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

This week the readings focus mostly on food, and more particularly on people eating together: a symbol of fellowship and togetherness, and a reminder of God's covenant with his people.

Isaiah (**First Reading**) issues an invitation to such a meal: ‘Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price ... I will make with you an everlasting covenant.’

The **Psalm**, traditionally sung at meal times by the Israelites, praises the Lord for giving them fulfilling food.

Even when he is tired and grieving the loss of John the Baptist, Jesus still shows compassion for the crowds who follow him (**Gospel**). He ensures that they can be fed, transforming the little that the disciples bring him into great abundance. This blessing and sharing of the loaves and fish by Jesus prefigures the meal we share in the Eucharist. Great comfort and support will be gained when we fully appreciate that nothing whatsoever can separate us from the love of God through Christ our Lord. (**Second Reading**).

Aware that nothing we do or think can make God love us less or more, we pray this week for all who do not know or accept Jesus as their Lord. We also keep in our prayers those who are in desperate need of food, whether physical or spiritual.



Opening Prayer

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.

Second Reading Romans 8: 35, 37–39

Brothers and Sisters: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Before I read this passage, I give myself enough time to find some measure of inner quiet. This is a moment, however short, which I freely choose to spend with the Lord.

I take a couple of conscious deep breaths. What mood am I in today? What are my hopes and desires for my encounter with the Lord today?

Blocking out all outside distractions as best I can, I slowly read St Paul's words, perhaps imagining that he has sent me this letter personally. I take my time ... his handwriting might be difficult to read, so I repeat each phrase to myself several times. One or two may resonate with me more particularly. If so, I stay with them.

As I ponder, I ask myself why this should be.

This may be a good time to turn to the Lord and reflect with him what is in my heart and mind at this stage. I spend the time I need listening to him.

How do I feel now? Comforted, encouraged, galvanised, or ...?

Maybe a greater appreciation of the love of God for me leads me to want to respond in some way.

In practical terms, what can I do to help others around me fully appreciate what the Lord is offering them?

Perhaps I remember something or someone in the past who helped me when I was struggling to accept the Lord's love for me. If I can, I recall that fondly, giving thanks with my own words of gratitude.

When I am ready, and without rushing in any way, I bring my prayer to a close. I return to my everyday activities 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'.

Gospel Matthew 14: 13–21

At that time: When Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' But Jesus said, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They said to him, 'We have only five loaves here and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Today, like Jesus in this well known gospel passage, I may need to find a quiet spot where I can lay down any demands made on me. Whether indoors or outdoors, I try to put aside all noise, whether internal or external.

I cherish these moments of respite, and then read the text several times until I am very familiar with it.

In my imagination, I may like to become part of the scene, whether as one of the disciples ... or the five thousand men ... or the women and children ... or as Jesus himself, feeling compassion for the crowd.

I can move freely from one to the other as my prayer unfolds.

What do I perceive to be their main needs? Are they hoping for some peace and quiet, to be healed, to be fed, to see this intriguing man Jesus in person?

What is my own main need?

Maybe I can recall a time when I needed to be fed, whether physically or spiritually, and someone unexpectedly came to me with the food I wanted.

I give thanks for my helper.

How far did it encourage me to cater for the needs of others, whether around me or further afield?

As I conclude my prayer, I pray:

'Our Father who art in heaven give us this day our daily bread ...'