

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

To you I call; for surely you will heed me, O God;
turn your ear to me; hear my words.

Entrance Antiphon

I call you by your name ... I am the Lord

First Reading

O sing a new song to the Lord;
Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

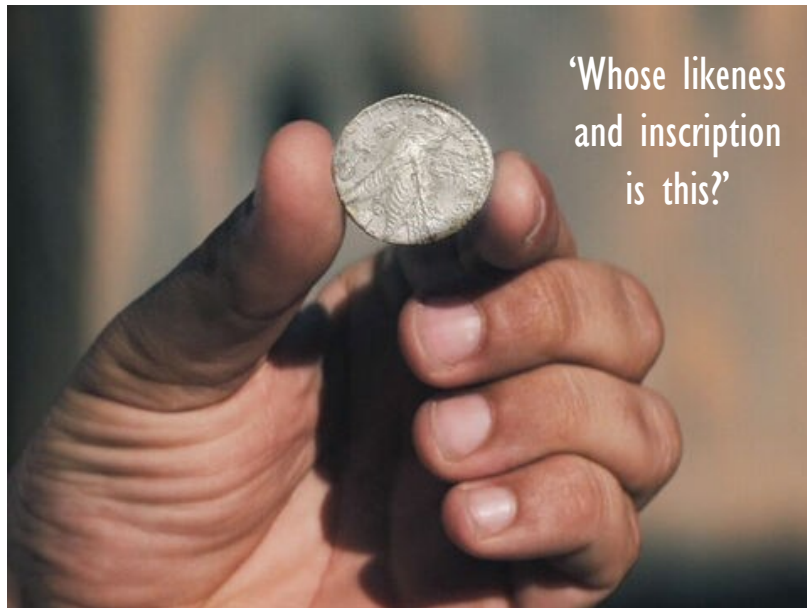
Psalms

Almighty and ever-living God,
Our source of power and inspiration,
Give us strength and joy
in serving you as followers of Christ.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:

Isaiah 45: 1, 4–6; Ps. 95 (96); 1 Thessalonians 1: 1–5; Matthew 22: 15–21



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



PREGO LEAFLET

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 18th October 2026

'Render to God
the things that are God's'

Our readings today leave us in no doubt that, as the Creator of all, there is only one God, who rules over everything on earth.

In the **First Reading** we hear Isaiah's prophecy concerning the pagan king, Cyrus, who, with God's help, will conquer nations, return the Jewish people to their homeland, and restore the greatness of Jerusalem. Through his actions, people around the whole world will know that God is Lord of all nations.

The **Psalms** invites us to sing of the power and glory of God. As in the First Reading, we are exhorted to tell others that the Lord is king, praising him above all else.

St Paul (**Second Reading**) writes to the developing Christian community in Thessalonica. He reminds them – and us – that we are chosen and loved by God. We know God not just through words, but also by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the **Gospel** we see Jesus neatly avoiding the trap set for him by those who seek to discredit him. Pointing out Caesar's image on a coin, he tells them, '*Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*'

In the week ahead, we pray for all those who are in positions of leadership around the world. We ask that God will steer and guide them to seek justice and fairness for all people.



Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
grant that we may always conform our will to yours
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

First Reading Isaiah 45: 1, 4–6

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before
him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:

‘For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I name you, though you do not know me.
I am the Lord, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know me,
that people may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am the Lord, and there is no other.’

I settle myself in the place I have chosen to pray. I try to set aside the cares of my day. Perhaps I listen to some music; focus on my breathing; or seek out any tension I am holding anywhere in my body: I notice this for a moment, and then consciously let it go.

When I feel ready, I pick up the text and read it through slowly a number of times. Maybe a word or a phrase particularly draws my attention?

I notice any feelings or sensations that arise in me. I may want to invite Jesus to be with me as I explore them.

What comes to mind as I ponder the story of Cyrus? The Lord has equipped him so that *‘people may know ... that there is none besides me’*. In what way has the Lord equipped me?

What gifts, talents and blessings has he given me? How do I use them?

Perhaps I sometimes struggle to believe that God has given me what I need, to do what he desires of me.

I speak to the Lord, as one friend to another, asking for what I desire to help me overcome my uncertainties.

I may like to draw my prayer to a close by asking for the grace, in the words of St Ignatius, to *‘want and choose whatever allows the Lord to deepen his life in me.’*

Gospel Matthew 22: 15–21

At that time: The Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle Jesus in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’

But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ They said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’

Mindful of how I am feeling, and how things are for me just now, I take as much time as I need to settle to pray, in whatever way works best. When I am ready, I read the Gospel, pausing to take in anything that particularly catches my attention. If it helps, I might want to enter into the tension of the scene that plays out here.

What do I see in the faces of those who are seeking to trap Jesus?

False humility and respect ... smugness ... malice?

What do they hope to achieve?

I watch and listen to Jesus. What can I learn from the way he responds?

How do the Pharisees and Herodians react as Jesus presents them with the image of Caesar? What is Jesus seeking to teach them?

What might he be saying to me?

Perhaps I am reminded of the phrase from Isaiah (First Reading):

‘I am the Lord, and there is no other’ ... besides me there is no God.

Jesus reminds his questioners – and me – that in spite of all worldly powers, everything ultimately comes from, and will return to, God.

I ponder all that I have been given. What might God want to say to me about what I give back to him? Am I always able to offer freely the things that are God’s? Perhaps there is something that holds me back?

I may like to share something about this with Jesus now. Resting in his presence, I listen for his voice.

In time, I take my leave, offering a prayer in my own words.