

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

Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple.

[*First Reading*]

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” [Psalm Response]

Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself.

[*Second Reading*]

He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him.

[*Gospel*]

All powerful and ever-living God, direct your love that is within us, that our efforts in the name of your Son may bring mankind to unity and peace.

[*Old Opening Prayer*]

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Isaiah 50: 4-7; Psalm 21 (22); Philippians 2: 6-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66



*How does
this image
speak to me
in my
prayer?*

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Palm Sunday
Year A
9th April 2017

**“Blessed are you,
who have come in your
abundant mercy!”**

As we begin this greatest of weeks when we solemnly remember God's loving mercy for us, we ask for a greater trust in that love.

Today's **first reading** (from the prophet Isaiah) foretells of the humiliation of the 'suffering servant' but also of his vindication. Because he trusts, the servant knows that ultimately he will be safe. The **psalm response** has us repeating the cry of the suffering Christ from the cross. Yet the last verse is a proclamation of trust and hope in the Lord who is ever near, and who will have the last say.

In the **second reading**, St Paul wants to reveal to us that it is through the emptying of Christ that true love is shown. By allowing himself to be made low through humility and trust, and by accepting suffering and even death, Christ is raised to the highest height.

Finally, the long Passion account from St Matthew's **Gospel** gives us the detail of what loving to the end really means. It deserves to be read in its entirety.

Let's pray, this week, that whatever trials we face, we might do so with ever greater trust in the Lord, who knowing suffering at first-hand, does not leave us to face them alone.

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who as an example of humility for the human race to follow,
caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross,
graciously grant that we may heed the lessons of his patient
suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection.

Second Reading: Philippians 2: 6–11

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.

But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I come to prayer gently – humbly – before my God. I ask for his grace and for the help of his Spirit. I allow the Spirit to guide me. I read the text slowly a few times. I allow it to settle. I try not to rush or force anything.

Then I ponder. What is striking me from these amazing lines? What image of Jesus is being presented to me ... small, lowly, humble, a slave? Or raised high, in glory ...?

How does this make me feel? I only move on when I am ready.

St Ignatius (in the *Spiritual Exercises*) used his imagination to contemplate the Lord becoming man for our sake. In my own prayerful imagination I may like to allow this miracle of divine love to unfold for me ...

How do I feel when I consider that Christ became as men are for love of me?

Is there any response I would like to make?

I share what I am experiencing in my prayer with God, as openly as I am able. Perhaps I ask that I might allow myself to fall ever more deeply in love with Jesus during this Holy Week.

If I can, I may like to end by kneeling slowly for a few moments as I glorify God by acclaiming: 'Jesus Christ is Lord'!

Gospel (part): Matthew 26: 14 – 27: 66

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him. It read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews". At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, "So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!" The chief priests, with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, 'I am the son of God.'" Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From his own experience, St Ignatius knew that we could only talk about God's abundant mercy and unconditional love by first placing ourselves before Jesus on the cross. Here we see the greatest of loves. I may like to begin by making the sign of the cross, and then, if I can, place myself before a cross in the presence of this great love.

I read the text slowly. If it helps, I try to imagine Christ suspended on the cross before me. I note any feelings arising within me.

What do I sense as I contemplate the Son of God, who has chosen to place himself here because of me?

Is there anything I would like to say to him ...?

Or it might be enough simply to be there, in silence, offering him my presence.

Whatever I choose, I know I can trust the Lord, and can talk to him or be with him as friend is to a friend. I stay with him for as long as I am able. Again, I note how I feel.

When ready, I end with a slow sign of the cross.