

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

My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord, and never forget his blessings.

Psalm

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others.

Second Reading

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
You have the message of eternal life.

Gospel Acclamation

Let us forgive, and we shall be forgiven. Let us have mercy on others,
and we shall feel that mercy of God, who, when he forgives, also
forgets.

Pope Francis (Lent homily, 1 March 2016)

Almighty God,
our creator and guide,
may we serve you with all our heart
and know your forgiveness in our lives.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Ecclus. 27: 30–28: 7; Ps. 102 (103); Romans 14: 7–9; Matthew 18: 21–35



Banksy, Girl with Balloon

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A
13th September 2020

The Lord is compassion and love

The readings this week speak of forgiveness, urging us to forgive others just as God forgives us. God loves us unconditionally. There is no limit to that forgiveness, so long as we ourselves show forgiveness to others, and don't hold on to any grievances.

The **First Reading** directs us to remember and live by the commandments, and especially not to bear any grudge against our neighbours. We are urged to let go of any anger, hate or resentment.

The **Psalm** is full of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. It tells of the strength of the Lord's love for us as well as his mercy; there is no end to his forgiveness nor love.

In the **Second Reading**, we hear of how the way in which we live our lives affects one other. Through Christ's life, death and resurrection, he has shown us that we belong to him both in life and death, unless we choose to turn away.

The parable of the unforgiving servant in the **Gospel** emphasizes the message of forgiveness. So long as we forgive others with complete sincerity, God will show compassion towards us. So long as we repent, he will forgive our sins an infinite number of times.

Over the week ahead, let's pray for one another and welcome God's gift of forgiveness, together with the healing, reconciliation and restoring of any broken relationship that it brings.

Opening Prayer

Look upon us, O God,
Creator and ruler of all things,
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.

Second Reading Romans 14: 7–9

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others;
if we live, we live for the Lord;
and if we die, we die for the Lord,
so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord.
This explains why Christ both died and came to life,
it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Taking my time, I prepare to enter slowly into prayer.

God is in no rush, but longs for me to spend time with him.

I make sure that I am comfortable. If I find it helpful, I focus on a candle or crucifix. I gently become still and conscious of God's presence.

I ask the Holy Spirit to help me become more aware of that presence, and to open my heart and mind even wider to it.

I pay attention to how I am feeling and ask the Lord to hold any thoughts or emotions that may be distracting me.

When I feel ready, I read the passage over several times, and ponder the meaning of St Paul's words.

Thinking of my own relationship with Jesus, I reflect over significant events in my life.

I may like to ask myself who or what has been an influence for me.

There will also have been times when I have had an effect on others.

In what way has this been?

I ask the Lord to show me where he has been present in all of this.

I ponder how he is leading me now, so that I can be with him always – that I might 'belong to the Lord'.

How do I feel now?

I share my thoughts, feelings and desires with the Lord, and ask for any grace that I feel I need right now.

Closing my prayer slowly, I thank the Lord for all the blessings in my life.

Glory be ...

Gospel Matthew 18: 21–35

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. 'Give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay the whole sum.' And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. 'Pay what you owe me,' he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, 'Give me time and I will pay you'.

But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?' And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

I begin my prayer slowly, then ponder how these words touch me.

When I may have needed forgiveness, how did I feel? How did that change, knowing I had been forgiven? Relieved? Grateful? Reconciled? Renewed?

The message of the Gospel is that the Lord expects *me* to forgive freely too.

How do I respond as I hear the answer to Peter's question, '*Lord, how often must I forgive?*' Can I hear Jesus speaking to me, too, through this parable?

Perhaps there have been times when I have struggled to forgive ... to let go of anger, resentment, grievances ... or I have failed to show compassion?

I share this with the Lord, and listen to what he has to say.

I may find the response to today's psalm helpful,

'The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.'

I thank God for the gift of forgiveness, and ask him to help me keep it close in my heart. *Our Father ...*