

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

The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.

First Reading

Visit this vine and protect it.

Psalm

The God of peace be with you.

Second Reading

The kingdom of God will be given to a people
who will produce its fruit.

Gospel

Father,
your love for us surpasses all our hopes and desires.
Forgive our failings,
keep us in your peace
and lead us in the way of salvation.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
Isaiah 5: 1-7; Ps. 79 (80); Philipians 4: 6-9; Matthew 21: 33-43



Whatever is true,
whatever is noble,
whatever is right,
whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable:
if anything is excellent
or praiseworthy,
think about such things.

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A, 8th October 2023

'The Vineyard of the Lord
is the House of Israel'

The image of the people of God as a vineyard is familiar in the Scriptures. We can rejoice in seeing the Church as the vineyard of the Lord, but we also need to respond to God's gifts and use them well.

In Isaiah's 'Song of the Vineyard', God has made the people of Israel his vineyard (**First Reading**). He lovingly cares for it, but sadly the people fail to respond.

The **Psalm** picks up the same theme. It is an appeal to God to turn again and visit the vine he has planted.

The vineyard appears in the **Gospel** too, but here the tenants are reproached. Not only are they not profitable, but they murder the owner's son.

St Paul writes that the peace of God is ours if we can only trust in him (**Second Reading**). We are to pursue all that is good and pure, and produce the fruit worthy of the Lord.

This week, may we be full of thanksgiving for all that we have received, and always turn to the Lord in prayer.



Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.

Second Reading Philippians 4: 6–9

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

I come to my place of prayer. I slow down, and breathe deeply once or twice.

I ask the Spirit of the Lord to be with me as I pray, and to pray within me.

When I am ready, I read the text slowly.

I now reread the first sentence carefully.

How can I enter into the advice Paul is giving to the Philippians, and to me?

Even if I do not feel great peace myself, maybe I can trust in the prayer of the Spirit within me.

What do I need in my life at this moment?

Whatever it is, perhaps I can place it in God's hands, remembering all that God has given me already.

I pray for faith, trust, joy, and a thankful heart.

Aware that I am in the presence of the Trinity, I ask Father, Son and Holy Spirit to fill my heart with all goodness and truth.

I ponder Jesus's example and teaching.

What particular gifts do I want as I follow him this week?

I turn towards the many people suffering in our world, and pray for God's peace.

I end my prayer with an *Our Father*.

Gospel Matthew 21: 33–43

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone. This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see? 'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

As I prepare to pray, I consciously take the time to relax my body and quiet my mind. I breathe gently and place myself in God's loving presence. I remain in this stillness for some time.

I then read the text slowly, a couple of times.

What strikes me in this parable? Perhaps I can ponder on God's generous care for his vineyard, and his patience with his tenants, despite their actions. In what ways might I have experienced something like this?

The owner leases the vineyard to new tenants. How can I see myself in the role of owner? How is my attitude different from that of the chief priests and elders?

I speak to the Lord of my thoughts and feelings about this parable.

Maybe I do so in gratitude for God's gifts: those of family and friends, of community, of the wonders of creation ...

What fruits can I myself offer?

I end my prayer with a *Glory be* ...