

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

The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek. *First Reading*

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. *Psalms*

There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength. *Second Reading*

The rich suffer want and go hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing. *Communion Antiphon*

Lord, our help and our guide,
make your love the foundation of our lives.
May our love for you express itself
in our eagerness to do good for others.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Isaiah 25: 6–10; Ps. 22 (23); Philippians 4: 12–14, 19–20; Matt. 22: 1–14



The 'Brunswick Monogrammist' (fl. 1525-45)
Parable of the Great Banquet (Wikimedia Commons)

'Invite everyone you can find to the wedding!'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A 15th October 2023

'I have my banquet all prepared.
Come to the wedding!'

As the end of the liturgical year gradually approaches, the readings begin to focus on the kingdom of heaven and the era beyond the end of time. This week, both the First Reading and the Gospel invite us to think of sharing in the great feast that God prepares for us. Isaiah explains how the Lord is preparing a banquet to which everyone will be welcome. There will be no more suffering or death. **(First Reading)**

In contrast, the **Gospel** parable speaks of guests who are invited by the king to a great wedding feast, but fail to attend. As a result, the king gets his servants to ask everyone they can find, good and bad alike, to replace those who have made excuses.

The **Psalms** reminds us that the Lord will see to all our needs so that we shall not want.

In the **Second Reading**, Paul writes to the Christian community in Philippi. Despite imprisonment and a probable death sentence, Paul has achieved a calm and accepting attitude to life through total trust and faith in the Lord.

This week, we might want to reflect on the way we respond when the Lord invites us to join him, and how we treat his messengers. In turn, perhaps we might feel called to invite those who seem to have been left by the wayside ... good or bad.



Opening Prayer

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.

Second Reading Philippians 4: 12–14.19–20

I know how to be poor and I know how to be rich too. I have been through my initiation and now I am ready for anything anywhere: full stomach or empty stomach, poverty or plenty. There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength. All the same, it was good of you to share with me in my hardships. In return my God will fulfil all your needs, in Christ Jesus, as lavishly as only God can. Glory to God, our Father, forever and ever. Amen.

Today I come to spend some 'quality time' with the Lord. Perhaps I need to clear my mind of any problems and concerns first. I may have my own way of doing that, or I may simply take a couple of deep breaths, and perhaps repeat a favourite phrase like 'Come, Lord Jesus, come!'

Only then do I read St Paul's words, slowly and prayerfully. They may be familiar, but I try to ponder their meaning as if for the first time.

What are these words telling me? How do they apply to my own life?

Paul seems to have achieved a measure of contentment and serenity in all circumstances with the help of the One who gives him strength.

I ponder this.

How do I feel before Paul's equanimity? Perhaps envious, sceptical, galvanised to try to do the same, or...?

I turn to the Lord, and, in my own words, tell him what is in my heart, trusting that he knows and understands me fully.

Perhaps I also focus on the gratitude Paul feels towards the Philippians and the absolute faith in God this shows.

There may have been times in my life where I could have been more grateful after someone helped me. What held me back?

I stay with this as long as I need. There is no need to rush.

Trusting in the Lord's presence with me, I speak with him as I would to a dear friend.

Eventually I say goodbye, hopefully able to thank God for the insights and the strength he has given me today.

Gospel Matthew 22: 1–14 (shorter version)

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people:
"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. Next he sent some more servants, 'Tell those who have been invited,' he said, 'that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding.' But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding.' So these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests."

Before praying this parable, I become aware of how I am feeling today. Whatever my mood, I accept it without judging and ask God to be with me. Trusting that the Lord always delights in my company, I slowly read the text. At first I simply focus on my immediate reaction without analysing too much. What does this tell me?

As I read again, I may want to focus on the feelings of the different characters in the story: the king, the servants, the invited guests, those found on the roadside.

With whom do I find myself empathising?

Why do they each act in their particular way?

Reflecting on my own life, are there times when I have acted like the king, the servants, or the uninvited guests?

Perhaps I can think of events when I was included at the last minute to make up numbers. Did I accept? What happened?

I speak with the Lord about anything that arises, and tell him how I feel. He knows me, understands me and forgives me if need be.

Eventually, slowly, I conclude my prayer with my own words of thanks for this time with the Lord.