

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

Praise the Lord for he is good;
Sing to our God for he is loving!

Psalm

I am the light of the world, says the Lord, anyone who follows me will have the light of life.
Gospel Acclamation

In faith and love we ask you, Father,
to watch over your family gathered here.

In your mercy and loving kindness
no thought of ours is left unguarded,
no tear unheeded, no joy unnoticed.

Through the prayer of Jesus
may the blessings promised to the poor in spirit
lead us to the treasures of your heavenly kingdom.

Old Opening Prayer

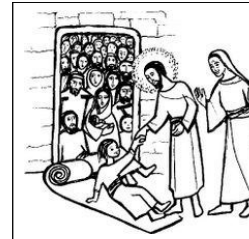
This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Job 7: 1-4.6-7; Psalm 146 (147); 1 Cor. 9: 16-19.22-23; Mark 1: 29-39



In the morning,
long before dawn,
Jesus got up and
left the house,
and went off to a
lonely place and
prayed there.

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year B, 4th February 2024

'He heals the broken hearted,
he binds up all their wounds.'

This Sunday, the readings invite us to look more deeply into the experience of human suffering. It is only through Christ that our pain and despair can and will be transformed. Just like the suffering people in today's Gospel, we all long for Christ. It is through prayer that our yearning will be fulfilled.

Job (**First Reading**) expresses total despair at the great losses that he has experienced; he seems overwhelmed by the frailty of life. The suffering in our world today perhaps makes it easy to relate to his sentiments.

The **Psalm**, however, is like an antidote to the howls of loss that Job exclaims. It speaks of healing for broken hearts and minds; of wounds being bound and tended by our loving God, whose wisdom extends across a universe that he knows and loves intimately.

In the **Second Reading**, Paul writes of how his own experience of Christ and the Gospel impels him to share the Good News with others. He feels that he is like a slave to the Gospel, and is happy to accept this role.

Today's **Gospel** portrays the early days of Jesus's healing ministry in Galilee. After praying with the community in the synagogue, Jesus responds with compassion to all the sick and suffering people who are brought to him. He begins his days in prayerful solitude and is drawn by a desire to bring his Good News to as many people as possible.

Let us pray for the grace to respond with wisdom and compassion to the suffering and needs of our time. May we centre our lives in prayer and by the grace of God be determined like St Paul to bring the Good News to our broken and hurting world.



Opening Prayer

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,
that relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,
they may be defended always by your protection.

Psalm 146 (147)

R/. Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.

Praise the Lord for his is good;
sing to our God for he is loving:
to him our praise is due.

The Lord builds up Jerusalem
and brings back Israel's exiles,
he heals the broken-hearted,
he binds up all their wounds.
He fixes the number of the stars;
he calls each one by its name.

Our Lord is great and almighty;
his wisdom can never be measured.
The Lord raises the lowly;
he humbles the wicked to the dust.

After stilling myself and allowing the busy-ness of my mind to settle, I consciously place myself before the Lord, and ask for the grace to open my heart, body and mind to his presence.

I turn to the psalm and begin by slowly reading and repeating the response: *'Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.'*

I let these words settle deep into my being.

As I listen to the words, what do I notice in my body? Where are my thoughts drawn? Which part of my being longs to be healed?

When I am ready, I pray with the rest of the psalm, slowly reading each line, pausing and listening to the deepest needs of my body, mind and soul.

What do I hear? To where is my attention drawn?

I place any hurt, wounds, needs or longings before our loving God.

God knows ... God listens ... God heals ...

I listen to what God wants me to hear, and I close my prayer with my own words of gratitude.

Glory be to the Father ...

Gospel Mark 1: 29–39

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they told him about her straight away. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them.

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you.' He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came.' And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

In the same way that Jesus would go off to a lonely place to pray, I go to my own place of prayer, and in the silence of my inner being I bring myself into the presence of our loving God. It may help to focus on a candle or holy image, or perhaps I simply follow the movement of my breath within me.

When I feel ready, I read the Gospel passage slowly.

What am I drawn to after my first reading of it?

Reading the Gospel as many times as I need, I use my imagination to try to enter more deeply into the events unfolding in Galilee. I may choose to be a disciple ... or someone in desperate need of healing.

What would it be like to receive the compassion of Jesus so directly?

Perhaps I imagine how Jesus himself might have been feeling among so many people in need of his healing presence?

What do I see in Jesus as he goes off to pray alone?

I share with him all that has come up in my prayer, and listen to his wisdom.

I bring my prayer to a close by making a slow sign of the cross.