

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

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. *Psalm*

He came to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. *Second Reading*

Father, let the gift of your life continue to grow in us,
drawing us from death to faith, hope, and love.

Keep us alive in Christ Jesus.

Keep us watchful in prayer
and true to his teaching
till your glory is revealed in us.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Jeremiah 23: 1–6; Psalm 22 (23); Ephesians 2: 13–18; Mark 6: 30–34



Evening light over Mynydd Mawr and the Nantlle Valley from Snowdon Ranger path

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year B, 18th July 2021

'You must come away ... and rest for a while'

The readings this week offer a welcome invitation to spend more time with our loving Lord who is our shepherd, and in whom we find nourishment, shelter, and peace for our minds and bodies.

In the **First Reading**, the prophet Jeremiah introduces the image of the Shepherd-King, who gathers, nourishes, and sets us free from fear.

The image of a God who restores, revives, guides, protects, feeds, anoints, and longs for us to dwell in God's presence forever, is proclaimed in today's beautifully familiar **Psalm**.

The **Second Reading** reinforces the image of a people being gathered in and restored to a peaceful relationship with and through Christ Jesus.

Through this relationship we are all united in the Spirit with the Father.

The **Gospel** scene is a perfect example of the Spirit at work in Jesus, as he compassionately responds to both the needs of his disciples and of his needy flock. Jesus recognises both the need for his beloved followers to be refreshed and restored in the stillness of his presence, and the need to respond with compassion to those who feel lost and are in need of his guidance.

Perhaps we can recognise this same dynamic in the expression of our own faith, as we ourselves need to make time to be still with the Lord, yet are also called to be active participants in his ongoing mission.

Let us pray for each other. May we have the wisdom to spend our time in a sustaining balance of both contemplation and action as we live out our faith, trusting that Jesus the Good Shepherd will be our guide.

'Come ... rest for a while in his presence ...'

Opening Prayer

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.

First Reading Jeremiah 23:1–6

‘Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of my pasture to be destroyed and scattered – it is the Lord who speaks! This, therefore, is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds in charge of my people: You have let my flock be scattered and go wandering and have not taken care of them. Right, I will take care of you for your misdeeds – it is the Lord who speaks! But the remnant of my flock I myself will gather from all the countries where I have dispersed them, and will bring them back to their pastures: they shall be fruitful and increase in numbers. I will raise up shepherds to look after them and pasture them; no fear, no terror for them any more; not one shall be lost – it is the Lord who speaks!

‘See the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will raise a virtuous Branch for David, who will reign as true king and be wise, practising honesty and integrity in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel dwell in confidence. And this is the name he will be called: The Lord-our-integrity’.

What do I bring to my time of prayer today?

How am I feeling in mind and body?

What are the concerns or joys that I wish to bring before the Lord, the Shepherd of my soul?

I place them all before the Lord, whose grace also cares for those needs I am not even aware of.

When I have become settled and silent before the Lord, I slowly read the prophet’s message.

To what words or images does my mind feel drawn?

Is it perhaps the tone of warning ... or maybe the images of wisdom, nurturing, and deep concern for his people?

Without judgement, I place my thoughts before my loving God, who gathers, sustains, and shelters me at all times.

Perhaps I imagine being gathered up ... held ... treasured ... and filled with wisdom, integrity and confidence by my ever-loving Lord.

How do I feel as I allow myself to be held, comforted, and nurtured by ‘The Lord-our-integrity’?

I close my prayer with my own words of thanks and ask for the Lord’s blessing as I make the sign of the cross.

Gospel Mark 6: 30–34

The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, ‘You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while’; for there were so many coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat.

So they went off in a boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But people saw them going, and many could guess where; and from every town they all hurried to the place on foot and reached it before them. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them because they were like a sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at some length.

I come to my own ‘lonely place’ of prayer – somewhere that I can be free of as many distractions as possible. It may be in nature, in my room, or even surrounded by others on public transport. Wherever I find myself, I imagine being in the presence of Jesus, who wants me to spend this time with him.

After coming to a point of stillness in the way that suits me best, I read the Gospel passage with loving attention.

Returning to the text as often as I need to, I use my imagination to enter fully into the Gospel scene.

What do I see, hear, and feel as I watch Jesus greet his friends on their return from their first mission?

Are they excited ... exhausted ... eager to share their experiences?

How do I imagine they are feeling at this time?

Have I ever desired to share my faith experiences with Jesus?

What do I notice in the disciples and Jesus when the crowds turn up and interrupt their precious time together? Does the mood change?

How do I myself feel when the ‘action-based’ demands of my faith seem to get in the way of reflective contemplative expression?

I share all that is in my heart with Jesus, and I listen to what he desires for me.

With gratitude for however my time of prayer has turned out, I close by joining Jesus in saying ‘Our Father ...’