

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

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call on you. [Entrance Antiphon]

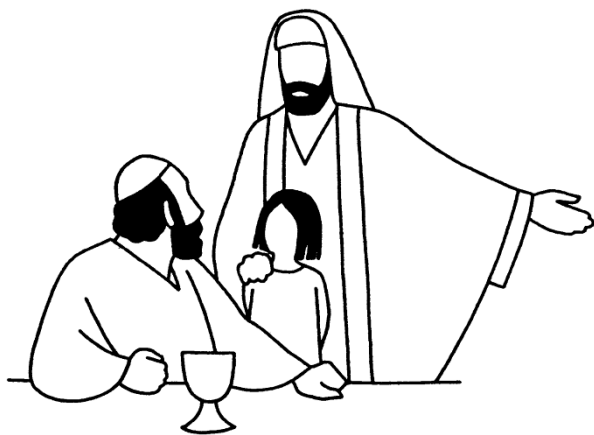
God of might, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name. [the Collect]

Father of the orphan, defender of the widow, such is God in his holy place. God gives the lonely a home to live in; he leads the prisoners forth into freedom. [Psalm 67]

Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. [Gospel Acclamation, Matthew 11: 29]

Let us pray that God will increase our faith and bring to perfection the gifts he has given us.

Almighty God, every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith, and by your constant care protect the good you have given us. [Old Opening Prayer]



"My friend,
move up
higher!"
The man
who humbles
himself will
be exalted.

HOW DOES THIS IMAGE SPEAK TO ME IN MY PRAYER?

SAINT BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



22nd Sunday in
Ordinary Time
Year C
1st September 2013

Before I am able to settle to pray, I need to quieten within me all the worries, pains, anxieties, problems which may be crowding my mind. I may have my own trusted way to come to inner quiet or I may want to try to take a deep breath and then breathe normally, breathing out all negativity, breathing in the air which sustains me, the love of God my creator.

Perhaps I repeat a short phrase which speaks to me such as, "The Almighty has done great things for me, Holy is his name" or, "Come Lord Jesus, Maranatha!"

When I am ready, I read the different texts of this Sunday's liturgy and notice they focus on being humble. It is the theme of the 1st reading and the gospel. It is by humbly following the Lord that we shall reach the heavenly Jerusalem of which the 2nd reading speaks.

The collect and the psalm focus on the giver of all good gifts, the defender of the orphan and the widow.

I spend some time reflecting on every good gift the Lord has given me and in gratitude, I may want to call on his name in reverence and praise. All I have and possess, he has given to me. I ask for his love and his grace to keep me safe and eager to serve him.

*God of might, giver of every good gift,
put in our heart the love of your name, so that,
by deepening our sense of reverence,
you may nurture in us what is good,
and by your watchful care,
keep safe what you have nurtured.*

The First Reading Ecclesiasticus 3: 17-20, 28-29

My son, be gentle in carrying out your business, and you will be better loved than a lavish giver. The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly, and then you will find favour with the Lord; for great though the power of the Lord is, he accepts the homage of the humble.

There is no cure for the proud man's malady, since an evil growth has taken root in him. The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables, an attentive ear is the sage's dream

The book of Ecclesiasticus is also called the book of Sirach. It is not found in the Hebrew bible. It was used by the early church and accepted as part of the official list of books in the Catholic bible - the Catholic canon - by the Council of Trent. There is some debate about its date, but it is generally accepted that it was written around 190-180 BC. It was a time of political uncertainty and strife, but Sirach advises humility in daily affairs.

I settle down to my prayer. It may help to have a tangible reminder of God's presence within me, around me: a candle, a cross, a favourite object.

I read the text slowly, perhaps repeating words or expressions which resonate in me, letting their meaning enter my consciousness.

The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly

What great humble people come to mind? Whether I heard about them in the news or whether they are close to me, I give thanks to the Lord for their lives and the inspiration they provide for others, for me.

I look at myself. Do I sometimes find it difficult to be humble?

I speak to the Lord about the times when I failed to rely on him and so failed to show humility.

I listen with attentive ears to his gentle advice.

As my prayer comes to an end, I thank the Lord for being with me.

I close my prayer giving him glory:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen

The Gospel

Luke 14: 1, 7-14

Now it happened that on a Sabbath day he had gone to share a meal in the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely.

He then told **the guests** a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this: -

'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, 'Give up your place to this man.' And then, to your embarrassment, you will have to go and take the lowest place.

No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, 'My friend, move up higher.' Then, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be raised up."

Then he said to **his host**, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relations or rich neighbours, in case they invite you back and so repay you. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; then you will be blessed, for they have no means to repay you and so you will be repaid when the virtuous rise again."

I go to the place where I like to pray and make myself comfortable. What sort of mood am I in? Who is the "me" I am bringing to the Lord today? When I reach some inner stillness, I pick up today's leaflet and read the gospel text several times.

I try to enter into the scene. Perhaps I focus on the interaction between the Pharisees and Jesus, each watching the other. Is there a difference in the way they look at the scene?

I listen to Jesus' words **to the guests**. Do they trigger in me some memories, joyful or difficult? Perhaps, at some stage, I have had to organise a seating plan for an important gathering. Jesus' advice is practical and down to earth. I then listen to what Jesus says **to his host**, I may find that in my imagination, I am the host. What feelings arise in me? What response do I make: "Yes, of course".."Yes, but..", "Oh no I could not because..."..or..?

I speak to the Lord about this and engage him in a conversation as two friends would with one another.

Eventually, I slowly come out of my prayer, thanking the Lord for being with me today. I end with a sign of the cross.