

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

Ever-loving Father, your care extends beyond the boundaries of race and nation to the hearts of all who live. May the walls which prejudice raises between us crumble...

(Opening Prayer)

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
(Psalm 66)

Jesus answered her (the Canaanite woman): 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again. (The Gospel)

Looking towards next week

*What does next week hold for me and how do I feel
God may be calling me?
And so, what do I want to ask of God
for myself or for others?*



SAINT BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



20th Sunday
Ordinary Time
Year A
15th August 2011

**Let the people praise you, O God;
Let all the people praise you.**

Opening Prayer Let us pray with humility and persistence:
Almighty, ever-loving Father,
your care extends beyond the boundaries of race and nation
to the hearts of all who live.
May the walls, which prejudice raises between us,
crumble beneath the shadow of your outstretched arm.

The Opening Prayer today reminds us that God, the one true God, is the God of all people, Christians and non-Christians alike, and his love and saving grace extend to all races and nation.

I compose myself in God's presence and read the opening prayer. I begin my prayer by asking God to free me from any prejudice which closes my heart and mind to the truth that we are ALL God's family, and are ALL made in his likeness no matter who we are.

I ask forgiveness if I have treated any one of a different faith, race, colour or gender in a way which forgets that he/she is my brother or sister whom I am asked to treat with respect and loving kindness.

I may want to remember the terrible suffering caused by racism and prejudice among the nations and peoples of our world - suffering which still continues. I talk with the Lord about this and pray for those who are suffering contempt, hatred, and discrimination today.

I turn to Jesus who knew what it was to be rejected and I ask him to heal the wounds of ignorance and fear which create prejudice and hate

1st Reading - Isaiah 56: 1, 6-7

Thus says the Lord: Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest.

Foreigners who have attached themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love his name and be his servants - all who observe the Sabbath, not profaning it, and cling to my covenant - these I will bring to my holy mountain.

I will make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their holocausts and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

At this time in Israel's history, only those who fulfilled all the religious Laws and traditions were accepted as pleasing to God. Foreigners and those who did not keep the laws were excluded from the Temple. This passage calls Israel to recognise and accept that God's love is greater than the Law and embraces all those who love and serve God even if they do so in different ways.

Perhaps it is a reminder to us today that people of different faiths who love and serve God are welcome in his 'House of Prayer'.

I read the passage slowly and prayerfully, allowing it to speak to me. I notice the thoughts or feelings which arise in me and share these with the God who invites me to grow in recognising that his love is universal.

I read the passage again and ask God to show me how to "have a care for justice and act with integrity". I ponder what this means in the circumstances of my daily life and how I can live with greater integrity. I ask for God's saving help.

Perhaps I thank God for the gift of my catholic faith and pray for all those who have strengthened it. I pray too for those who do not share that faith but love and serve God in other ways.

The Gospel - Matthew 15: 21-28

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word.

And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.'

But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

Today's Gospel is difficult. Canaanites are not among the Chosen People and Jesus' language seems insulting to the woman. But the story is a reminder to Israel that *God's promise will be fulfilled thro' them and will in the end bring blessings on the whole world.* The woman's reply shows she has grasped this truth of Jesus mission so he commends her faith and grants her request.

I come into God's presence with faith in his abiding love, knowing that he will hear my prayer and draw me closer to him. I read the Gospel, slowly and then place myself in the scene so that I am 'involved'. Perhaps I identify with that woman who needs Jesus' help so I tell him my needs and what is in my mind and heart.

I re-read the Gospel, again putting myself in the scene and asking to hear what God is saying to me through this story. I ask to grow in faith and openness to God's message in my daily life, and I thank God again for the gift of faith which I have received.