

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

- ▶ The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord (Entrance Antiphon).
- ▶ The whole house of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ (First Reading, Acts 2: 14).
- ▶ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want (Ps 23:1).
- ▶ You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls (Second Reading, 1 Peter 2:25).
- ▶ I am the good shepherd, says the Lord. I know my own sheep and my own know me (Jn 10:140)

Looking towards next week

What does **Holy 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 and for others?



SAINT BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Fourth Sunday of Easter
Year A
15th May, 2011



**I have come so that they
may have life,
and have it to the full.**

Opening Prayer (Version 2):

Let us pray to God , our helper in time of distress:

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
though your people walk in the valley of darkness,
no evil should they fear;
for they follow in faith the call of the shepherd
whom you have sent for you're their hope and strength.
Attune our minds to the sound of his voice,
lead our steps in the path he has shown,
that we may know the strength of his outstretched arm
and enjoy the light of your presence for ever.

I approach my place of prayer with a symbol of new life. I become still, relaxing my body, mind and breath. When ready, I recall the life-giving moments of the past week, telling God in what ways they were life-giving, and thanking him for them.

- ▶ I read the opening prayer, pausing where I feel drawn, and pondering the words and phrases that attract my attention.
- ▶ I remember people whom I know and people across the world who are walking in the valley of darkness just now. What do I feel as I call them to mind? What do I want to ask God to give them? I pray for them and for myself that we will always listen for and find hope in the voice of the Good Shepherd.
- ▶ I close my prayer in my own words.

Responsorial Psalm—Ps 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.

If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.

You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort,

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

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.

This very familiar psalm is worth praying many times.

- ▶ I may pray it, verse by verse, as the story of my life in which God has been a shepherd to me directly and through others, and in which I have been a shepherd to others.
- ▶ I may pray it as the life of Jesus—the true shepherd who is my model. What particular part of Jesus' life as shepherd attracts me? How, perhaps, is he calling me to imitate him?
- ▶ I may pray it from inside the shoes of those who suffer in our world today. In whose shoes will I stand? What is my prayer to God as that person / persons?

I draw my prayer to a close in whatever way is appropriate.

The Gospel: John 10: 1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way, is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger, but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.' . . .

'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.'

This passage was written when Jewish leaders, the supposed shepherds of the people, were excommunicating from the synagogues those Jews who believed in Jesus. Jesus claims to be the true shepherd; he approached the people openly; they felt God's presence in him and freely followed him. He also claims to be the true gate to eternal life. Leader who prevent people from following Jesus are not shepherds!

- ▶ I read the passage and may pray it as *a lectio divina*: I ponder those words and phrases that draw my attention, and I talk with Jesus as I ponder.
- ▶ Or—I may read and pray it as Jesus, as a Jewish leader who is listening to Jesus, or as a Jew who has been expelled from the synagogue. What do I feel as I pray the passage in these different roles, and what do the feelings express?
- ▶ I share everything with Jesus who is my true shepherd.