

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

- ▶ May we live the faith we profess (*Opening Prayer*).
- ▶ Have we not all one Father? . . Why, then, do we break faith with one another? (*First Reading*).
- ▶ Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord. (*Resp. Psalm*).
- ▶ God's message is still a living power among you who believe it (*Second Reading: 1 Thess 2:13*).
- ▶ Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life (*Gospel Acclamation*).
- ▶ You have only one Master . . . You have only one Father, and he is in heaven. . . . You have only one Teacher, the Christ (*The Gospel*).
- ▶ Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted (*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 and for others?



SAINT BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



31st Sunday
Ordinary Time
Year A
30th October
2011



May we live the faith we profess

Opening Prayer (Version 1):

Let us pray that our lives will reflect our faith

God of power and mercy,
only with your help can we offer you fitting service and praise.

May we live the faith we profess
and trust your promise of eternal life.

I approach my place of prayer and ask God for the gift of stillness. Aware of all that is around me, I let go of them, giving my attention to God, and aware of his loving gaze on me. I rest there, allowing God to gaze, and responding as I feel drawn.

I read the opening prayer, noticing that I am seeking the gift of authenticity, of living out my faith in my daily life.

I reflect on what it means to be a follower of Jesus. What kind of person was Jesus? What kind of people do I expect Christians to be?

- ▶ I identify those ways in which I am like Jesus, and I thank him for these gifts
- ▶ I reflect on the ways in which I wish to become more like Jesus, and I ask him for those graces.

To be like Jesus is to be like the Father. Very slowly I bring my prayer to a close by saying the Our Father.

The Second Reading - 1 Thessalonians 2: 7b-9, 13

Like a mother feeding and looking after her own children, we felt so devoted and protective towards you, and had come to love you so much, that we were eager to hand over to you not only the Good News but our whole lives as well. Let me remind you, brothers, how hard we used to work, slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you while we were proclaiming God's Good News to you.

Another reason why we constantly thank God for you is that as soon as you heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is, God's message and not some human thinking: and it is still a living power among you who believe it.

This passage is about Christian leadership. Just before this passage Paul says that, as an apostle, he wasn't looking for praise; nor did he want to impose things on people. His leadership was like Jesus' leadership, a leadership of love, encouragement and service.

I settle in my prayer space and read the passage slowly. After a short pause I re-read the passage, noticing the words and phrases that stand out for me, and the images that come to mind. I ponder these and then talk with God about them.

- ▶ What parts of the reading attract me? Why might this be so? I talk with the Lord about this.
- ▶ Are there parts that aren't quite so attractive? I talk with the Lord about it.
- ▶ I re-read the passage, this time as Jesus' and Paul's personal word to me, and I respond as I feel called.

I bring my prayer to a close with a praise of thanks for the ways in which God has 'served' me through others.

The Gospel - Matthew 23: 1-12

Addressing the people and his disciples, Jesus said, "The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must, therefore, do what they tell you and listen to what they say; but do not be guided by what they do: since they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels, like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, being greeted obsequiously in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi. You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted."

This passage is also about leaders, and about the way they use their authority. Some use it to serve and help people; others use it for selfish reasons and to control others. Matthew tells us that the one leader to whom we can look with absolute confidence is Jesus.

I read the passage, *seeing* Jesus talk to the people, *hearing* his words about the scribes and Pharisees, *imagining* the actions that Jesus describes, *watching* the people's faces as Jesus speaks. I place myself in the scene. Where am I? Who am I? Which words of Jesus touch me? In what way(s) do they touch me? What are my feelings? What perhaps lies beneath them?

I talk with Jesus from the depths of my heart, thanking and asking for graces, as is appropriate.