

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

May the Lord bless you from Zion ... all the days of your life! *Psalm*

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. *Gospel*

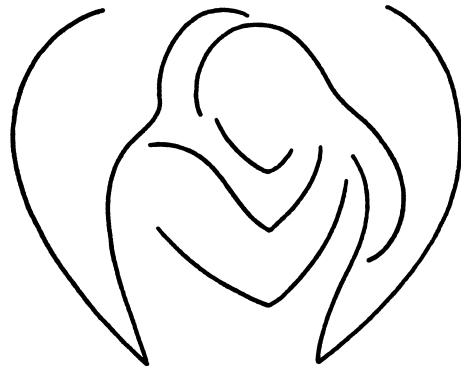
'Creation' has a broader meaning than 'nature', for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. ... creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all ... reality illumined by love, calling us together into universal communion.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, 76

Father, your love for us
surpasses all our hopes and desires.
Forgive our failings, keep us in your peace
and lead us in the way of salvation.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Genesis 2: 18-24; Psalm 127 (128); Hebrews 2: 9-11; Mark 10: 2-16

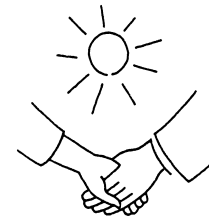


The
Lord God
said,
'It is not good ...
to be alone'

Genesis 2: 18
(First Reading)

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year B
7th October 2018

*May the Lord bless us
all the days of our life*

This week's readings speak of our need for love and companionship. Whatever our vocation in life, we need other people.

In the **First Reading**, we see God our Lord creating a remedy for human loneliness by making both men and women to be helpmates for one another. Those who selflessly share their lives and their love, in whatever way they find themselves called by God, create a unity that witnesses to the love of God in creation.

Jesus experienced human life as we do, even to accepting death. He understands our weaknesses, but labours to bring us to glory with God through his suffering (**Second Reading**). He calls us his sisters and brothers in holiness.

The **Gospel** tells of Jesus being challenged by the Pharisees in an attempt to trap him. Jesus is uncompromising in upholding the intention of God that married persons should remain together in a union blessed by God, while accepting fully the human weakness and sin that can lead to divorce. He encourages the little children to come to him, laying his hands on them and blessing them. He invites his followers to welcome the kingdom of God with child-like trust and faith.

We respond in the **Psalm** by asking the Lord to 'bless us all the days of our life'. We rejoice in the gifts that others bring to our lives.

Opening Prayer

Almighty, ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.

First Reading Genesis 2: 18–24

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate'. So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh!

This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man.'

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.

The Old Testament Creation story contains some beautiful truths about the relationship between women and men. We need not take the details of the story as literally true in its description of events at a time before historical facts could be remembered. But we can allow God to teach us the deep meaning the story conveys about human love, its sexual expression within marriage, and the joy and unity this brings.

Before I begin, I try to become still in the presence of God, my creator who gives me life. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me pray.

I read the story of God's creating power slowly, with reverence.

I notice any words or phrases that resonate with me or touch something in my experience. I share these with the Lord.

God labours in creation to provide for us and to give us the companions we need. I ponder Adam's shout of joy as he finds the one with whom he will share his life and love. Perhaps his words are not those I would choose? Again, I speak with the Lord from my heart, finding my own expression of longing, gratitude or joy.

Together, the first people are asked to care for the whole of God's creation. How am I to take my part in caring for the Earth?

I end my prayer in whatever way I am drawn, perhaps praying for others or asking for the grace I need.

Our Father....

Gospel Mark 10: 2–16 (part)

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him.

He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?'

'Moses allowed us,' they said, 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So what God has united, man must not divide.' ...

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

As I come to my place of prayer, I first become aware that God our Lord gazes on me with love, rejoicing in all my gifts and forgiving all my sin and weakness. Whatever I have been or will be, God loves me just as I am. I ask the Lord to deepen my faith and trust in his love.

Then I read this challenging Gospel, taking my time, noticing what feelings and thoughts it evokes in me. Whether these emotions are difficult or joyous, I share them with God who loves and cares for me.

I may like to imagine myself as a child coming to Jesus. Perhaps I allow him to put his arms around me and bless me. What is it like to be touched by Jesus? Is there anything I want to say to him or ask him? With the trust of a child, I remain close to Jesus, knowing he wants me to be with him, just as I am. I listen for what he might have to say to me.

After some time, I take my leave, thanking the Lord for being with me.

It may help, when reading this Gospel, to know that in Jesus's time, the Law of Moses concerning divorce was being interpreted to allow a man to divorce his wife for quite trivial reasons, perhaps leaving her destitute without support. Jesus invokes an older tradition that made women and men equal in marriage, thus showing his support of women, and disapproval of their abuse.