

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

Out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule. *First Reading*

Visit this vine and protect it. *Psalm*

Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. *Second Reading*

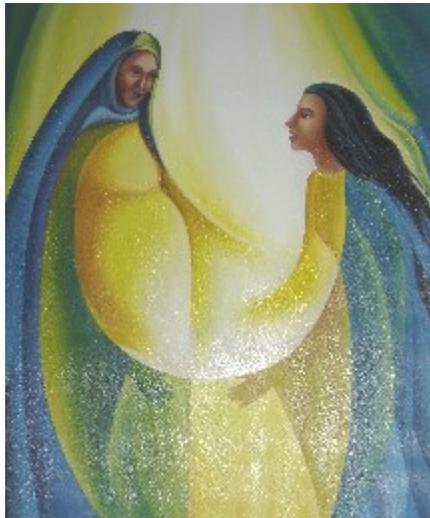
Let what you have said be done to me. *Gospel Acclamation*

Blessed is she who believed. *Gospel*

Lord, fill our hearts with your love,  
and as you revealed to us by an angel  
the coming of your Son as man,  
so lead us through his suffering and death  
to the glory of his resurrection.

*Old Opening Prayer*

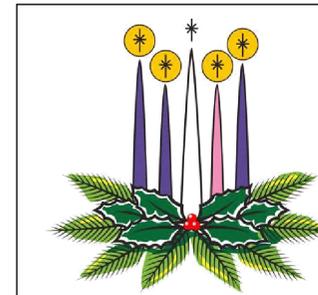
This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Micah 5: 1-4; Psalm 79 (80); Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45



How does  
this image  
speak to me  
in my  
prayer?

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**ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Fourth Sunday in Advent  
Year C, 23rd December 2018

'Christmas is God's response  
to the drama of humanity  
in search of true peace'

Benedict XVI

As we leave the season of Advent and step into the celebration of Christmas, we are given a liturgy filled with promise and hope.

In his **Gospel**, St Luke shows how salvation dawns through the meeting of two women. The Father's promise for humanity is fulfilled in Mary, the "most blessed of all women". Elizabeth recognises this through the movement of her own child within.

Micah, the prophet, draws together the great expectations of the people (**First Reading**) and shows how God's power is revealed in peace and security.

The letter to the Hebrews (**Second Reading**) calls those seeking security in past rituals to a new way of worship, that of self-giving love.

Finally, today's **Psalm** is a plea for God's continued protection, which is a source of both life and strength.

This week, let's pray that God's life and strength, rooted ever deeper in our hearts, may give rise to a new and hopeful way of worship through self-giving love.

### Opening Prayer

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,  
your grace into our hearts,  
that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son  
was made known by the message of an Angel,  
may by his Passion and Cross  
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

## Psalm 79 (80)

**R./ God of hosts, bring us back,  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.**

**O** shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
shine forth from your cherubim throne.  
O Lord, rouse up your might,  
O Lord, come to our aid.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,  
look down from heaven and see,  
Visit this vine and protect it  
the vine your right hand has planted.

May your hand be on the one you have chosen,  
the one you have given your strength.  
and we shall never forsake you again:  
give us life that we may call upon your name.

As I enter into prayer, I try to become aware of how I am feeling now.

If I can, I gently hand over any worries to the care of the Lord.

I read the psalm slowly. I notice what seems to touch me. Then I pause to ponder. I take my time. I read again, gently allowing any words or phrases to deepen within me. What do I see or hear this time?

The psalmist calls on the God who brings us back, who hears us, who comes to our aid, who visits us, who gives us life. It is less about what we are doing; much more about God moving towards us.

How does this make me feel? Can I share the psalmist's trust?

Maybe the refrain '*let your face shine on us*' seems significant.

I may like to ponder where, in my life, the Lord has shone the light of his face. Where is he shining even now?

For what, for whom, can I be truly grateful? If I can, I recall my blessings in a spirit of thanks.

I cannot know what God looks like, but I can know how a loved one's face looks when they see me. I imagine that now, and spend some time simply gazing at God and being held in love.

As I come to the end of my prayer, I may like to ask for God's help to incline my heart toward the light of his face throughout the coming week. *Glory be ...*

## Gospel Luke 1: 39–45

**M**ary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

On the eve of this Christmas season, I take some time to become quiet. I may be full of distraction; there may be demands all around me ... But perhaps like Mary, I recognise how important it is to draw apart into the company of someone who understands me. I can trust in the Lord's presence with me as I pray.

Mary goes to Elizabeth. In my prayer I go with her. I, too, may have things to ponder...

Perhaps, like Mary, I feel invited to tell others of the Word of God, of how this miraculous birth touches me. How do I want to respond?

If it helps, I share my thoughts with the Lord in the company of Mary.

The Gospel text describes the very first meeting of John the Baptist with Jesus. Can I recall times when I have met the Lord? How do I herald him in my daily life? I pause ...

In the circumstances of everyday life, how do I live my faith?

Whom do I visit when I need to share and be renewed?

Who seeks *me* out? I think of them now.

Can I share Elizabeth's joy as I reflect on Christ's coming? I spend some quiet moments resting in the delight that comes from trusting in the Lord's promise.

I end by slowly praying, as did Mary:

*'My soul glorifies the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'.*