

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

Be my protector, O God ... lead me, guide me. *Entrance Antiphon*

You are my refuge, O Lord; you fill me with the joy of salvation.  
*Psalm*

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.  
'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' *Gospel*

God our Father,  
you have promised to remain for ever  
with those who do what is just and right.  
Help us to live in your presence.

*Old Opening Prayer*

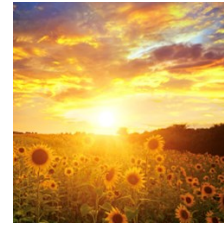
This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46; Ps. 31 (32); I Cor. 10: 31-11:1; Mark 1: 40-45



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'We touch the flesh of Christ in those who are outcast, hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned, ill, unemployed, persecuted, in search of refuge.'  
Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy* (2016)

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



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year B, 11th February 2024

'Whatever you do at all,  
do it for the glory of God'

The theme of today's readings is God's loving compassion and healing. We, too, are called to be loving, as well as pure and holy.

Two of the readings speak of leprosy: a disease that can now be cured, but at the time was seen as a punishment for sin. The belief was that either the leper or one of their family had offended God in some way. The **First Reading** reveals the requirements imposed on lepers. They were to make themselves physically unattractive, so that people would know they were unclean, and to live apart, outside the city walls. They were thus sentenced to indefinite exile from their community and excluded from worship.

The leper we meet in the **Gospel** breaks the law because of his faith. He approaches Jesus, pleading to be made clean. We see Jesus's compassion, mercy, and healing power in curing him. The leper can be readmitted to his community once he has seen the priest, though conversely, Jesus now becomes the outcast.

In the **Psalm** we hear the joy of the psalmist who, in acknowledging and repenting of his sins, is confident of the Lord's forgiveness.

The **Second Reading** calls us to be witnesses to Christ's teaching in everything we do, whilst always being sensitive to others.

This week, I may like to pray for the courage, humility and faith of the leper in the Gospel, as I bring my own desires and needs to Jesus. I ask for the Spirit's guidance to be loving and helpful to others at all times.



### Opening Prayer

O God, who teach us that you abide  
in hearts that are just and true,  
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace  
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

## Second Reading 1 Corinthians 10: 31–11.1

Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God. Never do anything offensive to anyone – to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God; just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all times, not anxious for my own advantage but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved.

Take me for your model, as I take Christ.

As I come to my place of prayer, I take a few moments to notice how I'm feeling. What's going on in my life at the moment?

I try to set aside any worries or uncertainties and begin to settle.

I know I can take as long as I need: there is no rush.

I turn my attention towards the Lord who is always with me, waiting patiently for me to spend time with him.

To help me focus my mind and heart on the Lord, I may like to say the response to today's psalm:

*'You are my refuge, O Lord; you fill me with the joy of salvation.'*

I become aware of the warmth of God's loving gaze upon me ... his presence beside me ... or God being with me in whatever way God wishes. I savour this quiet time for as long as I'm able.

When ready, I read the whole passage through slowly and carefully, several times. What draws me? How is it speaking to me?

*'Whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God.'*

I think about my own life. Is everything I do 'for the glory of God', or might there be other motives at times?

St Paul models his own behaviour on Christ, and he urges us to do the same. Again, I ponder my own life and how I'm bearing witness to Christ.

In what ways am I sensitive to the traditions of others?

Perhaps there are times when I struggle or feel challenged ...?

Knowing that God loves me as I am, I speak from my heart about anything I'm finding difficult.

What grace am I seeking that I feel might help me?

Perhaps a greater trust, or openness, or generosity ...?

Only when I'm ready, and with thanks, I slowly close my prayer with

*'Glory be...'*.

## Gospel Mark 1: 40–45

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to,' he said, 'you can cure me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your recovery.' The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would come to him.

I gently become still. Then, asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel. Where am I being drawn?

Perhaps it's to the leper himself. I may feel invited to spend time with the leper before he meets Jesus ... or after he is healed, sharing in his joy as he is now able to rejoin his community.

Or maybe I am drawn to Jesus: his response, *'Of course I want to!'* ... his touch, as he stretches out his hand ... his stern orders to the leper. Perhaps I stand with Jesus as he himself now becomes the outcast?

I may notice other details within the scene: the desperation in the leper's voice as he falls to his knees ... the loving compassion in the eyes of Jesus; his tone of voice as he touches the leper with the words *'Be cured!'*.

I see the astonishment on the face of the disciples as they watch Jesus and the leper breaking Jewish law.

Perhaps I imagine myself kneeling beside the leper as Jesus turns his attention to me, listening to my request for whatever I may be seeking. *'If you want to Lord, you can give it to me'*.

Can I let Jesus reach out and touch me, heal me? How do I feel when I hear his response to me?

Jesus understands first-hand what it's like to feel rejected and isolated. I ponder how I can reach out and share Jesus's compassion with those at the margins of society, or who feel abandoned.

With deep gratitude, I slowly close my prayer with a sign of the cross.