

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

To you have I lifted up my eyes. *Psalm*

My power is at its best in weakness. *Second Reading*

He could work no miracle there. *Gospel*

Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.
St Ignatius Loyola, 'Suscipe' prayer from the Spiritual Exercises

Father,
through the obedience of Jesus,
your servant and your Son,
you raised a fallen world.
Free us from sin
and bring us the joy that lasts for ever.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Ezekiel 2: 2-5; Psalm 122 (123); 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10; Mark 6: 1-6



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

James Tissot: Jesus unrolls the scroll



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year B, 7th July 2024

'My grace is enough for you'

Today's readings encourage us to place our whole trust in God's grace, for God's power is at its strongest even when we are most weak.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus has left Capernaum, the scene of many 'mighty deeds,' and headed for the home where he grew up. Once in Nazareth there is a change of mood. While his listeners are impressed by stories about him, they can't get over the fact that Jesus is one of their own, another worker, just like each of them, with sawdust in his hair and dirt under his fingernails.

The **First Reading** hints at the defiant and obstinate spirit of the townsfolk. Perhaps Jesus sees himself as Ezekiel's 'Son of man' when he says in today's Gospel that a prophet is despised in his own country. As Ezekiel writes, 'Whether they listen or not, this set of rebels shall know that there is a prophet among them'.

The **Second Reading** encourages us to rely on God when things seem to be a struggle. St Paul, faced with failure and his own weakness, clearly heard from God that it was exactly through such weakness that God's strength would be known.

The antidote to pride, scorn, and contempt is mercy (**Psalm**), and we receive it when we abandon ourselves to God. As 'slave to the master' or as 'servant to the mistress' (as the psalmist puts it), let's keep our eyes firmly fixed on our Lord, this week, till he shows us his mercy.



Opening Prayer

O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 12: 7–10

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, ‘My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.’ So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ’s sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.

I spend some minutes becoming still, letting my breathing fall into a rhythm, allowing my body to relax, waiting for my mind to settle. Then I ask myself: how am I feeling as I come to this time of prayer? Content ... weak ... facing some hardship?

Very slowly, I read this letter from St Paul. Then I pause, before reading it again. What am I noticing? To where am I being drawn? Is St Paul describing something that seems familiar to me?

Perhaps there is something in my life that I would wish to have removed. What is it? Have I talked to the Lord about it? We hear that St Paul ‘pleaded’. What is my prayer like?

St Ignatius often asked his retreatants, as they moved into prayer, to plead for and discern the grace they needed. What grace am I asking for today?

A phrase from a well known prayer of St Ignatius is included on the back page. What is the grace, from the Lord, that is ‘enough’ for me? Is this different from what I am seeking?

I talk to the Lord freely. I can be very honest and open.

Perhaps I ask that I might surrender myself to the power of Christ that stays over me.

Glory be ...

Gospel Mark 6: 1–6

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, ‘Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us? And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is only despised in his own country among his own relations and in his own house’; and he could work no miracles there, though he cured a few sick people by laying hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

After my usual methods of moving into quiet, I read this Gospel slowly, reflectively, prayerfully. As I ponder, I ask for the illumination of the Holy Spirit – that this Gospel might be alive to me and active within me.

In my prayer, I see Jesus in his home place on the sabbath, doing what he does elsewhere. The crowds are astonished. I watch and I listen. How am I reacting to him?

Because they already know Jesus and his family, his home and his work, the people of Nazareth cannot accept him.

Am I shocked by this? How well do I know Jesus? Is he familiar to me? Does this familiarity help me to accept him, or does it prevent me from knowing who he really is ...?

Does this make it more difficult for Jesus to do what he wants to do in me?

After all the crowds have gone, perhaps I am alone with Jesus in the synagogue. What will I say to him? Perhaps that he might reveal himself to me; that he might help me let down my guard; that he might break into my heart to lay his hands on me, to heal me, to give me faith ...

Does Jesus say something to me?

I stay with Jesus for as long as I can, before ending with a slow sign of the cross.