



AMDG  
21ST SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME  
26TH AUGUST 2018



**The words I have spoken to you are spirit  
and they are life.**

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose,  
grant your people to love what you command  
and to desire what you promise,  
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,  
our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.

This Sunday, we conclude five weeks of readings and teaching from St John's *Gospel* on the meaning of the Eucharist.

Jesus is the Bread of Life. For some of the disciples, this teaching proves too much and they stop following him. The question that Jesus puts to the Twelve is also put to us today: 'What about *you*, do *you* want to go away too?'

A similar question was addressed to the tribes of Israel gathered at Shechem (*First Reading*). Joshua asks the elders and leaders of the tribes which god they want to follow. They recognise that it is the Lord, the God of Israel, who was with them throughout their slavery in Egypt, and throughout the hardship of their exile in the desert. The people of Israel reject the gods of their ancestors and of the other nations and become a single people committed to the one true God.

The *Psalms* we pray with today compares the experience of the one who turns to the Lord with humble trust with those who turn their back on the goodness that is offered to them.

The teaching from the Letter to the Ephesians (*Second Reading*) encourages us to see that Christian marriage is modelled on the love that Christ has for the Church. Christ feeds his Church out of love, because the Church is his body and we are its living parts.

As we come to prayer this week, may we have the grace to recognise that same love active in our lives, so that when we are asked by God, 'What about you ...?' we can respond with a willing and loving heart.

## PSALM 33 (34): 2–3.16–23

*R:/ Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

**I** will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips;  
**I**n the Lord my soul shall make its boast.  
The humble shall hear and be glad.

The Lord turns his face against the wicked  
to destroy their remembrance from the earth.  
The Lord turns his eyes to the just and his ears to their appeal.

They call and the Lord hears and rescues them in all their distress.  
The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;  
those whose spirit is crushed he will save.

Many are the trials of the just man  
but from them all the Lord will rescue him.  
He will keep guard over all his bones  
not one of his bones shall be broken.

Evil brings death to the wicked;  
those who hate the good are doomed.  
The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants.  
Those who hide in him shall not be condemned.

I slowly prepare to pray. I become aware of how I am feeling, and I place all that is within me and upon my mind before my Lord.

I prayerfully read the response to the psalm, '*Taste and see ...*'

I use this image as an entry to my prayer.

Slowly and with reverence, using all my senses, I pray with the psalm.

As I read the words, what images come to mind? What do I hear and see?

I may want to bring these images to life in my imagination.

If I become aware of any emotions that are stirred within me, where do I notice them in my body?

I bring these experiences before God and share with God my deepest feelings.

Perhaps I reflect on the spirit in which this psalm was written.

Are there things that hinder me from blessing the Lord at all times?

Which words or phrases give me comfort, or speak to my own faith life?

I reflect on where I see the Lord's goodness in my life.

I gather all that I have pondered in my heart and thank God with my own words of blessing.

## GOSPEL JOHN 6: 60–69

**A**fter hearing his doctrine many of the followers of Jesus said, ‘This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?’ Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, ‘Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.’

For Jesus knew from the outset those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. He went on, ‘This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows them.’ After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him.

Then Jesus said to the Twelve, ‘What about you, do you want to go away too?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.’

As I come to my place of prayer, I allow my mind to slow and settle in whatever way suits me best.

When I feel ready, I reflect over these last few weeks of the Gospel teaching on the Eucharist ... from the description of the Feeding of the Five Thousand to the teaching of Jesus as the Bread of Life.

How have I responded to these readings? I hold these thoughts in mind and then slowly read the Gospel passage.

It may help my prayer to use my imagination to see the events and actions unfold before me. I perhaps place myself within the scene as a bystander, or as one of the Twelve.

What do I notice? Where is my attention drawn? What do I feel?

Jesus says his words are spirit and they are life. What does this mean to me?

I read the Gospel again, this time perhaps focusing on the end of the passage, where only Jesus and the Twelve are present.

I place myself in the heart of the scene, and when Jesus says ‘What about you [my name], do you want to go away too ...?’ how do I respond?

In silence I listen to Jesus as he in turn responds to me.

I close my prayer making a slow sign of the cross.

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

... choose today whom you wish to serve.

As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord. *First Reading*

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life;  
you have the message of eternal life.

*Gospel Acclamation*

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

*Psalm*

*This week's texts if you want to reflect further:*

*Joshua 24: 1–2, 15–18; Psalm 33 (34); Ephesians 5: 21–32;*

*John 6: 60–69*



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH  
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