

HOW DOES THIS IMAGE HELP ME IN MY PRAYER? AND IS THERE SOMEONE WITH WHOM IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO SHARE MY PRAYER?



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

Father, look down on your people in their need. *Entrance Antiphon*

A pure heart create for me, O God; put a steadfast spirit within me. *Psalm 50*

May the Father enlighten our minds so that we may see what hope his call holds for us. *Gospel Acclamation*

There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance. *Gospel*

Father, when your children sinned and wandered far from your friendship, you reunited them with yourself through the blood of your Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. *Preface*

Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham



LDS

AMDG

24TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR C, 11 SEPTEMBER 2016



There will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

OPENING PRAYER

Father in heaven Creator of all,  
look down upon your people in their moments of need,  
for you alone are the source of our peace.

Bring us to the dignity  
which distinguishes the poor in spirit.

As I prepare for prayer, I become still ... I focus on God waiting for me – for me alone, for me his very dear friend. I come into his presence and share with him the past week. I notice how God responds to what I share.

I read the opening prayer slowly ... perhaps more than once. I notice those words/phrases/ideas that catch my attention. I ponder them ... and talk with God about them.

Perhaps I talk about my needs at this time. Perhaps I remember times when I was conscious of God's peace deep down inside me. What did this peace feel like? Where is it present in or absent from our world today? Maybe I am drawn to pray for peace – for people I know, for myself, for our world.

I bring my prayer to a close by re-reading the opening prayer, making it personal, or by saying the Lord's Prayer.

## FIRST READING: EXODUS 32: 7–11, 13–14

The Lord spoke to Moses, ‘Go down now, because your people whom you brought out of Egypt have apostatised. They have been quick to leave the way I marked out for them; they have made themselves a calf of molten metal and have worshipped it and offered it sacrifice. “Here is your God, Israel,” they have cried, “who brought you up from the land of Egypt!” I can see how headstrong these people are! Leave me, now, my wrath shall blaze out against them and devour them; of you, however, I will make a great nation.’

But Moses pleaded with the Lord his God. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘why should your wrath blaze out against this people of yours whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with outstretched and mighty hand? Remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, your servants to whom by your own self you swore and made this promise: I will make your offspring as many as the stars of heaven, and all this land which I promised I will give to your descendants, and it shall be their heritage for ever.’ So the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

*This reading appears to present God as forgiving only after Moses intervenes. But it is actually the story of the people learning that God doesn't behave like pagan gods that they still believed existed. God doesn't punish, but is faithful to his promise to bring all safely to their promised land.*

I read the text and note that the people abandon God for a false God after their escape from Egypt. I wonder why? They had no image of God, so perhaps they wondered if he really existed ... weren't quite sure if they could trust him ... felt that he had abandoned them. Perhaps I have at times abandoned God and shared some of these feelings.

Moses recalls all that God has done for his people. What has God done for me in my life? I talk with God about this.

God promises to lead us safely to our promised land – heaven. How do I want God to help me on this journey?

I talk with God about what is in my mind and heart.

## THE GOSPEL SHORTER FORM: LUKE 15: 1–10

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. ‘This man,’ they said, ‘welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ So he spoke this parable to them.

What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, will not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? “Rejoice with me,” he would say, “I have found my sheep that was lost.” In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance.

‘Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? “Rejoice with me,” she would say, “I have found the drachma I had lost.” In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.’

I read the passage and note what the different groups are doing. Where am I with those around Jesus? With the critics? Do I find it hard to forgive, to be forgiven, to ask for forgiveness? Do I need help to know where I need forgiveness? If so, I ask Jesus for this help.

I watch Jesus with the sinners. I sense him reaching out to the critics. He invites us to reflect on how we search for something precious that is lost, and then throw a party when we find it. He says that this is what God is like with sinners: no condemning, no judgement, just rejoicing. I watch the joy of Jesus and the sinners. Can I enter into this joy?

I talk with Jesus. What do I say? How does he reply? I remember the lines of the Our Father – *Forgive us as we forgive others*. I close my prayer by slowly praying this phrase, making it very specific, if need be.