



AMDG
25TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A
24TH SEPTEMBER 2017



**‘My thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways.’**

OPENING PRAYER

O God,
who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbour,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.

The words ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways’, summarise the themes found in this week’s readings.

In Isaiah, the *First Reading*, the people, exiled in Babylon, are encouraged to trust in God. God has plans for them.

Today’s *Gospel* is a parable from Matthew, and may cause us to stop and consider God’s ways. This is not how we would act. It calls us to rethink our understanding of justice and generosity.

Psalms 144 (145) is a song of praise to God, emphasising especially his greatness, and particularly his attributes of compassion, kindness, and abounding love; his lack of anger, and his closeness.

St Paul, in the *Second Reading*, is caught in a dilemma. He, too, has difficulty in understanding God’s ways. He wants to be with Christ, but he also wishes to continue his work on earth. His measure is the Gospel and trusting in God’s will for him – whatever it may be.

As we read, pray and live the readings this week, we may also try and pull ourselves up short on our preconceived notions of God’s actions.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 55: 6–9

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked man abandon his way,
the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on him,
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
for my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.
Yes, the heavens are as high above the earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.

As I settle to pray, I may light a candle
and become aware of God's presence around and within me.
I breathe in his life that continually upholds me.
I take the time to read the text slowly.
Perhaps the first two lines can be my entry into prayer.
If I cannot be always conscious of seeking the Lord,
I can give this time completely to him.
I offer it to him, as well as my whole heart, soul and mind.
God is there, willing to welcome me, to accept me with love and forgiveness.
I may spend some time just becoming aware of God's unconditional love for me,
and of his desire to deepen his relationship with me.
I give him praise as I marvel at his infinite glory and power,
at the immense gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, our salvation.
I speak to him of whatever touches me in this reading.
Maybe I ask for the grace to accept whatever plans he may have for me.
I end my prayer asking for him to be with me this week and praying:
'*Glory be to the Father ...*'

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 20: 1–16

Jesus said to his disciples: “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, ‘You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.’ So they went. At about the sixth hour and again the ninth hour, he went out and did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘You go into my vineyard too.’ In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first.’ So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. They took it, but grumbled at the land-owner. ‘The men who came last have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day’s work in all the heat.’ He answered one of them, ‘My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?’ Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.”

I come to my place of prayer and become aware of being held in God’s love.

I slowly read the parable a couple of times.

I try not to go ‘into my head’ but note what has struck me.

Is it the way the landowner keeps hiring rejects?

Have I felt called to work in the kingdom at different times in different ways?

Or is it the way the landowner calls one of the aggrieved workers ‘My friend’?

Is my compassion open to everyone ... and have I been the recipient of such attention?

I speak to the Lord about this. Do I feel that God’s love is a free gift for us all?

Perhaps I may ask to be free of all feelings of envy and resentment and to be able to relax into this love.

Our heavenly Father is a giver of gifts. Maybe I can give thanks and not feel that I need earn anything. I turn to him and speak from my heart.

I quietly end my prayer with a slow sign of the cross.

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

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.

First Reading

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

Responsorial Psalm

Life to me, of course, is Christ.

Second Reading

Have I no right to do what I like with my own?
Why be envious because I am generous?

Gospel

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:

Isaiah 55: 6–9; Psalm 144 (145); Philippians 1: 20–24, 27;

Matthew 20: 1–16a



**Why be envious because
I am generous?
The last will be first,
and the first, last.**



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



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

LDS