



AMDG  
31ST SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME  
4TH NOVEMBER 2018



**The Lord our God  
is the one Lord**

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God,  
by whose gift your faithful offer you  
right and praiseworthy service,  
grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling  
to receive the things you have promised.

Our readings this week remind us that the love of God and of our neighbour is the foundation and the rock of our faith and life.

The text from Deuteronomy (*First Reading*) is the famous Shema Yisrael prayer, beloved by Judaism and used every morning and evening. Israel keeps the law of God because she loves God with her whole soul.

In the *Gospel*, Jesus uses the same text to answer the scribe's question as to which is the greatest commandment. However, Jesus takes it further by adding a second commandment, to love one's neighbour. These two commandments are inseparable.

The few verses of Psalm 17 (18) in our *Responsorial Psalm* are a song of love and praise to our God. The Psalm is a prayer of thanksgiving to the God who has done so much for us and continues to do so.

St Paul, in the *Second Reading*, represents Christ as the ideal High Priest of the New Covenant. He unceasingly intercedes for us with the Father.

This week, may the command to love God with all that we are and in all that we do find expression in our awareness of all whom we meet.

## PSALM 17 (18)

*R. / I love you, Lord, my strength.*

**I** love you, Lord, my strength,  
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.  
My God is the rock where I take refuge;  
my shield, my mighty help, my stronghold.  
The Lord is worthy of all praise:  
when I call I am saved from my foes.

Long life to the Lord, my rock!  
Praised be the God who saves me.  
He has given great victories to his king  
and shown his love for his anointed.

I come to my place of prayer and become aware of being in God's presence.  
I relax into this presence which is the love of God.

I take the time to read the text slowly a couple of times.

There is a wealth of images here.

Which one strikes me today?

Is it the physical concept of rock, fortress, saviour, shield, refuge or stronghold?

... Or maybe the more abstract values of strength, might, help, saving?

I spend time with my image. What is it saying to me?

Perhaps I can recall times when the Lord has 'saved me', and I give thanks for this.

Or maybe I am in need of his saving help now, and I try to strengthen my faith in his dependable love.

God is a living God and the psalmist repeatedly says 'my God'.

I may pray the psalm again, concentrating on the wonder of our personal relationship.

I end my prayer with gratitude as I think of the love God has shown me.

Perhaps I can use the refrain '*I love you, Lord, my strength*', as I continue my day.

## GOSPEL MARK 12: 28–34

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and put a question to him, ‘Which is the first of all the commandments?’

Jesus replied, ‘This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’

The scribe said to him, ‘Well spoken, Master; what you have said is true: that he is one and there is no other. To love with all your heart, with all your understanding and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.’

Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken said, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And after that no one dared to question him any more.

As I prepare to spend time with the Lord I try to relax my body and my mind.

I breathe in God’s life and love and let all negativity and anything that blocks my relationship with him be breathed out.

When I am ready, I read the text slowly and carefully.

I come before Jesus: my teacher, my intercessor with the Father.

In what way can I identify with the scribe?

Is his question also mine ... or do I have others?

I allow them to rise without effort.

Does Jesus’s reply answer all my questions?

Perhaps I can open my heart, my soul and my mind to his all-enveloping love, so that I can love myself and others with his love.

The scribe comments that love of God and neighbour is far more important than any ritual. In what ways does this help me to express my love for God in my daily life?

Which rituals, in turn, unite my life and prayer?

I spend time resting in God’s unconditional love, and end my time of prayer in thanksgiving.

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

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your strength.

*First Reading*

I love you, Lord, my strength,  
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.

*Psalm*

Christ's power to save is utterly certain,  
since he is living for ever to intercede for all  
who come to God through him.

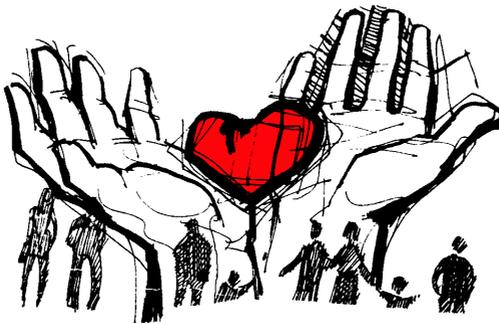
*Second Reading*

To love [God] with all your heart ... and to love your neighbour as  
yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.

*Gospel*

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

*Deuteronomy 6: 2–6; Psalm 17 (18); Hebrews 7: 23–28; Mark 12: 28–34*



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH  
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT  
Ministries



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

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