



AMDG
31ST SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A
5TH NOVEMBER 2017



**Keep my soul in peace
before you, O 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.
Amen.

Our readings this week are both a harsh criticism of how some aspects of established religion can lead us to pride, and also a gentle teaching on simplicity and humility.

In the First Reading, Malachi has hard words for the priests who have strayed and led others to stumble.

Jesus, too, in the Gospel criticizes the leaders who lay heavy burdens on the people – those who only think of their own importance, rather than of teaching God's word and care for others.

However, the words of St Paul to the Thessalonians in the Second Reading are in great contrast. He reveals a maternal affection for his people, and is willing to give up everything for them so as to spread the Good News. He is full of thanksgiving for God's work in them.

The Psalm is a beautiful prayer of humble trust in the Lord, with the image of a child resting in his mother's arms. We are encouraged to hope in God whatever comes.

Perhaps this week, awareness of our closeness to God will lead us to humble prayer rather than empty practice.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 130 (131)

R./ Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.

O Lord, my heart is not proud
nor haughty my eyes.

I have not gone after things too great
nor marvels beyond me.

Truly I have set my soul
in silence and peace.

A weaned child on its mother's breast,
even so is my soul.

O Israel, hope in the Lord
both now and forever.

I come to my place of prayer ...

perhaps I light a candle to help me focus and remind me of God's presence.

Repeating the refrain '*Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord*'
may also help me to enter slowly into prayer.

When I am ready, I read the psalm slowly, a couple of times.

If I can, I try and place myself quietly in God's presence,
and remain there for as long as is comfortable.

If not, I move on to the text.

The words encourage me to be humble before my God –
to contemplate his greatness and glory, and not to focus on myself.

Can I imagine myself as a child in the arms of God – my Mother or my Father?

Or maybe I can unite myself with the young Jesus,
as Mary prayed this psalm with him.

I may remember others I wish to pray for,
that they may find peace and hope in the Lord.

As I end my prayer, perhaps I will remember the response throughout the day.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 23: 1–12

Addressing the people and his disciples Jesus said, “The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must therefore do what they tell you and listen to what they say; but do not be guided by what they do: since they do not practise what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people’s shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels, like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, being greeted obsequiously in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi.

“You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers and sisters. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who exalts themselves will be humbled, and anyone who humbles themselves will be exalted.”

As I settle to pray, I take the time to quieten my mind and body.
I breathe in God’s love and goodness, and ask the Spirit to be with me
as I prepare to pray the Gospel.

Having read the text slowly a couple of times, I try and place myself in the crowd listening to Jesus.

His words are very direct. How do I feel as I listen?

Am I amongst the scribes and Pharisees, aware that I do not always act according to what I think or say? If so, perhaps I can speak to Jesus about this.

Or maybe I am among the crowd, and feel weighed down by duties and obligations. Can I speak of this to the Lord?

I sit quietly and endeavour to listen and to rest in God’s presence.

Maybe I think of my motivations – not allowing myself to be cowed, but neither seeking approval. I ponder on Jesus’s respect for others.

I consider his words: ‘*You are all brothers and sisters*’.

I pray for unity in the Church, in the world.

I finish my prayer with a slow ‘*Our Father ...*’

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

Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?

First Reading

O Israel, hope in the Lord, both now and forever.

Responsorial Psalm

We constantly thank God for you.

Second Reading

Anyone who exalts themselves will be humbled,
and anyone who humbles themselves will be exalted. *Gospel*

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

*Malachi 1:14 – 2: 2, 8–10; Psalm 130 (131); 1 Thessalonians 2: 7–9, 13;
Matthew 23:1–12*

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on its mother's
breast, even so is
my soul.**



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



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