



AMDG
FOURTH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR C
3RD FEBRUARY 2019



‘Make it our glory to praise you!’

OPENING PRAYER

Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honour you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.

Today’s *First Reading* takes place in 627 BC. Jeremiah, a shy and gentle teenager, is called, against his better wishes, to proclaim a message contrary to the expectations of those around him. As a result, his life will have more than its fair share of rejection and failure.

The liturgy connects Jesus with this rejected prophet figure of Jeremiah. Jesus, having read from the prophet Isaiah (last Sunday’s *Gospel*), is met with hostility in his home synagogue. His own people, knowing him merely as Joseph’s son, cannot accept the challenge to respond to his message. Jesus’s rejection at Nazareth is found in each of the Synoptic Gospels.

In the early church community based at Corinth (*Second Reading*) there were disagreements about which charism was best. St Paul offers a way above all others – the way of love. It is the greatest of God’s gifts and the one that endures.

Today’s *Psalms* is a song of hope and trust. The prophets of the Lord do not travel alone, but in the face of rejection, persecution and even death, they are delivered and saved.

This week, I pray for the hope and trust that allows me to go forward with confidence, even in the face of misunderstanding and rejection.

SECOND READING 1 CORINTHIANS 13: 4–13

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge – for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known. In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

I come to prayer conscious of how I am feeling today. I may come with a deep sense that things are imperfect, or that I am seeing only dim reflections ... but I ask for confidence in the Lord who knows me fully and who gives me the gifts I need.

I read the lines from St Paul slowly, perhaps pondering my own gifts – maybe a strong spiritual sensitivity; maybe a willingness in me to raise my voice against abuses of power? Or I may have gifts of language or knowledge?

I pause to spend some time in thanksgiving.

I now ponder the lines of the reading – 'all these gifts will fail'. They are gifts given for a time ... not to be clung to. How does this make me feel?

What, then, is most important to me – what are the things that last?

I look to the 'love' spoken of in the reading. If it helps, I could substitute my own name for the word 'love'. Reading in this way, I note how I feel.

There may well have been occasions when I have felt jealous, boastful or conceited, selfish and resentful.

I may also be able to recall times when I have been patient and kind, ready to excuse, to trust, to hope.

I end my prayer by speaking to the Lord, who is love. I speak from the heart, a heart made in love for love.

GOSPEL LUKE 4: 21–30

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue: ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’ And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, ‘This is Joseph’s son, surely?’ But he replied, ‘No doubt you will quote me the saying, “Physician, heal yourself” and tell me, “We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside.”’ And he went on, ‘I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country. ‘There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah’s day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha’s time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.’

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

I prepare slowly for this time of prayer. Perhaps it may help to imagine myself walking into the synagogue at Nazareth. Flames in lamps flicker and dance. The smell of burning oil hangs in the air. I sense an atmosphere conducive to prayerful worship.

I ask for the help of the Holy Spirit – may a spirit of silence be created within me, so that I might hear the word and accept it.

I read the text slowly, more than once. I pause often. I ponder gently.

I listen to the words of Jesus ... What do I notice as he speaks?

What are the other listeners doing? What is going on within myself?

What pleases me? Does anything cause me unease?

Jesus is offering a way of living that is wholly inclusive. But his teaching is challenging, uncompromising. Who are the excluded that Jesus wants to welcome ... and who are they today? I notice how this sits with me.

Could his way of living be mine too? I don’t need to react like others.

I simply ask myself, ‘Who do I believe Jesus to be?’

I think how I want my prayer to end. I may feel compelled to go out to the hilltop in defence of Jesus. Or I may wish to remain in the empty synagogue, pondering what Jesus’s teaching might mean in my life.

When ready, I end with a slow sign of the cross.

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

I have appointed you as prophet ...
so now brace yourself for action!

First Reading

I am with you to deliver you – it is the Lord who speaks.

First Reading

There are three things that last: faith, hope and love;
and the greatest of these is love.

Second Reading

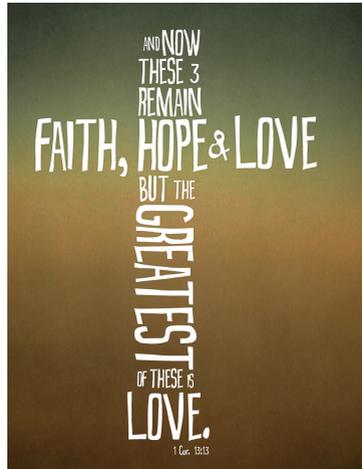
This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Jeremiah 1: 4–5, 17–19; Psalm 70 (71); 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13;

Luke 4: 21–30



How does
this image
speak to me
in my prayer?



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



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

LDS