



AMDG
4TH SUNDAY IN LENT
YEAR B
11TH MARCH 2018



We are God's work of art

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who through your Word
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray,
that with prompt devotion and eager faith
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebration to come.

The readings for this '*Laetare* ('Rejoice') Sunday' reveal the Lord's desire to save his people.

In the *First Reading*, the exile of the people, and later their release through the pagan king Cyrus, are understood in terms of God's judgment and mercy.

Today's *Psalms* speaks of the desolation that is experienced when the Lord's goodness is no longer felt. In exile, the people could not be joyful. They could recall the presence of the Lord, but only with regret at its apparent loss.

The gift of the Lord's presence is given, ultimately, through God's loving gift of his Son to the world (*Gospel*). God loved us so much that he has led us back from the exile of sin, and in bringing us to life in Christ, he has made us a 'work of art'. Jesus is the means by which we are saved, so that we might live 'the good life' of grace in return (*Second Reading*).

Let's pray, this week, for a greater awareness of the Lord's wonderful gift, full of grace, that frees us from the darkness of exile to the light of joyful living.

SECOND READING EPHESIANS 2: 4–10

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ – it is through grace that you have been saved – and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.

I prepare myself for this time of prayer with care and attention.

I note how I am feeling. I think back over my day.

Are there any concerns and worries I carry? Or am I joyful and grateful?

Perhaps I have some sense of what I truly need.

I ask the Lord for the gift of this grace: I can be confident because I know the Lord is 'generous with his mercy'.

Then I enter into prayer slowly.

I settle and become aware of the close presence of the Lord.

If I do not feel it, I simply trust that it is there.

I read the text gently, savouring these lovely expressions of the Lord's nature ... his generosity, his goodness, his grace toward me.

I may be able to recall times in my life when I have sensed this.

God has brought me to life; given me a place with him in heaven ...

I am God's work of art. I have done nothing to earn this.

It is all pure gift, given through grace.

How do I feel now, as I ponder this?

Grateful ... ? free ... ? perhaps wishing to respond ...?

I speak with the Lord about what he has done for me and about how he looks upon me.

I think about ways I might like to live by way of response.

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

GOSPEL: JOHN 3: 14–21

Jesus said to Nicodemus: ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God’s only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world, people have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear their actions should be exposed; but the one who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what they do is done in God.’

I read the Gospel prayerfully.

I pay attention to where I am drawn, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I could pray this Gospel scene by imagining that, like Nicodemus,

I approach Jesus in the darkness of night.

How does it feel to sit with him? What am I looking for?

And how does Jesus appreciate my being with him, my seeking him out?

In the scene, Jesus is alluding to the salvation he will accomplish through his Passion ... that ‘generous mercy’ of the Second Reading.

And all of this because God loves the world, because God loves me ...

What is it like to be the recipient of this wonderful free gift?

Jesus also speaks of light and darkness.

He desires us to live in the light ... perhaps, too, that we reveal the dark places within ourselves so he can heal us.

How would I like to respond to him?

What can I do this week to ensure I am trying to live by that light?

Trusting in his goodness, I end my prayer by asking the Lord to help me live my life for his greater glory.

Our Father ...

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

Let my tongue cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not!

Psalm

God loved us with so much love.

Second Reading

How infinitely rich he is in grace.

Second Reading

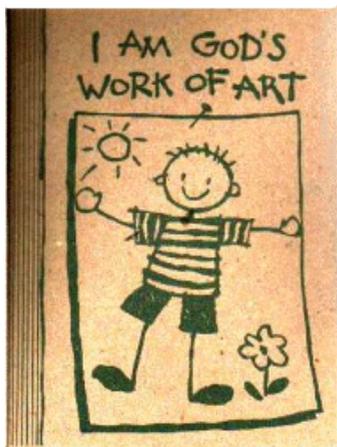
We are God's work of art,
created in Christ Jesus to live the good life.

Second Reading

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.

Gospel

*This week's texts if you want to reflect further
2 Chronicles 36: 14–16, 19–23; Psalm 136 (137);
Ephesians 2: 4–10; John 3: 14–21*



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