

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

Planted in the house of the Lord,  
they will flourish in the courts of our God,  
still bearing fruit when they are old,  
still full of sap, still green,  
to proclaim that the Lord is just.

*Psalm*

The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, the smallest of seeds,  
yet grows into the biggest shrub of them all.

*Gospel*

God our Father,  
we rejoice in the faith that draws us together,  
aware that selfishness can drive us apart.  
Let your encouragement be our constant strength.  
Keep us one in the love that has sealed our lives,  
help us to live as one family the Gospel we profess.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Ezekiel 17: 22–24; Psalm 91 (92); 2 Corinthians 5: 6–10; Mark 4: 26–34



The world is  
charged with  
the grandeur  
of God ...'

*Gerard Manley  
Hopkins SJ*

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**ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year B  
13th June 2021

'This is what the Kingdom of God is like ...'

This Sunday, the Old Testament reading, Psalm and Gospel alike all use simple and beautiful images from nature to teach us eternal truths. It is as if we are being encouraged to both see and draw from the wisdom of God as expressed throughout the natural world.

The Prophet Ezekiel (**First Reading**) uses a shoot from a mighty cedar tree to describe how the Kingdom of God will grow, and to describe how intimately God is at work throughout creation.

The **psalmist** sings of both the cedar of Lebanon and the palm-tree. Those whose life is rooted in the Lord will always bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom Parables in the **Gospel** draw on similar images of God's seeds of love and truth slowly growing and bearing fruit in ways that we often cannot see, and fail to understand fully. The Kingdom of God is within us and around us. It is not a realm of power and dominance; rather it is a spirit of growth and nourishment rooted in compassion and love, providing shelter and sustenance for all.

In the **Second Reading**, Paul encourages us to be confident of our faith and to place our trust in Christ.

Perhaps in our prayer for this coming week, we can make a special effort to look more deeply at nature on our doorstep and connect more meaningfully with it. May we have eyes to see God's Kingdom at work throughout nature and in our fellow human beings. May we grow ever closer to God in all that we do, so that we may be living expressions of God's Kingdom on Earth.

### Opening Prayer

O God, strength of those who hope in you,  
graciously hear our pleas,  
and, since without you mortal frailty can do nothing,  
grant us always the help of your grace,  
that in following your commands  
we may please you by our resolve and our deeds.

## First Reading Ezekiel 17: 22–24

The Lord says this:  
‘From the top of the cedar,  
from the highest branch I will take a shoot  
and plant it myself on a very high mountain.  
I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel.  
It will sprout branches and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar.  
Every kind of bird will live beneath it,  
every winged creature rest in the shade of its branches.  
And every tree of the field will learn that I, the Lord, am the one  
who stunts tall trees and makes the low ones grow,  
who withers green trees and makes the withered green.  
I, the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.’

As I prepare to pray, I remind myself that I am always in the presence of God. I ask God to give me the grace to awaken to the signs of this wondrous presence all around me and deep within me.

I guide myself to stillness. Taking a few purposeful, long slow breaths,  
I invite my body and mind to settle down and become present.

When I feel ready, I read the scripture passage prayerfully and with reverence. I pause in silence ... is there a particular image I am drawn to notice? ... I ponder on this ... and then reread the words as many times as I need. I use my imagination and all my senses to bring to life the vision of nature described in this reading.

The mighty cedar ... the young, fresh green shoot ... the timeless mountain ... the sprouting branches ... new leaves ... new growth ... fruit and seeds ... the birds and creatures that shelter and depend on the tree ... the endless cycle of growth ... death ... new life ... growth ...

What do I see, hear, smell and feel as I ponder on each of these signs of God’s presence?

If I can, I may extend this time of prayer by taking a walk and pondering on the wonder of the cycle of life in the nature on my doorstep, whether a mighty tree or a simple blade of grass. I pray that I may see that ‘The world is charged with the grandeur of God ...’ (Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ)

I end my prayer with heartfelt words of thanks ...

## Gospel Mark 4: 26–34

Jesus said:  
‘This is what the Kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.’

He also said, ‘What can we say the Kingdom of God is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like the mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.’

Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He would not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples when they were alone.

After settling myself into a calm prayerful state of mind and body,  
I read this Gospel passage with love and care.

Taking each parable at a time, I let the images and the messages they convey bring light and truth to the concerns of my life and to the expression of my faith.

Where do I see the Kingdom of God slowly but steadily growing in the world today?

What is my relationship with the Kingdom of God?

Jesus mostly used images of the natural world to explain deep truths about the Kingdom. I ponder what this means for my relationship with God, with the environment, with my fellow creatures and the people around me.

I share my pondering and deepest longings for the world and for God’s Kingdom with Jesus as I would with a beloved friend.

When I am ready, I close my prayer by saying ‘*Glory be to the Father...*’