

# Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**THY WILL BE DONE**

**Daily Prayer**  
*in Lent*

**Wednesday 17 February 2021 to Saturday 3 April 2021**

When you come before God,  
find a quiet and secluded place.  
Just be there as simply and as honestly as you can.

The focus will shift from you to God,  
and you will begin to sense his grace.

*cf. Matthew 6:5-6*

Welcome to this special edition of prayers and reflections for daily use during Lent. Life under the coronavirus restrictions offers us more space in which to pause in prayer and contemplation. Yet - it can also be a struggle to do so because of the fears and anxieties, loneliness and sadness that can threaten to overwhelm us. Sometimes, when life is tough, it can be hard to tune into God's love and listen to him. Jesus knows that praying isn't always easy and this is why he gave us the Lord's Prayer. During Lent, we will journey with these words which are so familiar to us.

May you find fresh sources of hope and strength, comfort and challenge in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

God bless,

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### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **PART ONE**

### **Heaven**

#### **Preparation**

As you prepare to meet with God, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence and spend a little time gazing into its flickering flame. When you are ready, reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

An offering of a free heart will I give you  
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is gracious.      *Psalms 54:6*

#### **Opening Prayer**

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,  
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,  
and through me.

**Amen.**

#### **Reading and Reflection**

*Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.*

#### **Our Prayer for this Week**

Heavenly Father,  
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,  
and grew closer to you in the desert:  
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer  
that we may witness to your saving love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father...

#### **Conclusion**

May God bless us and watch over us,  
and look kindly on us and give us peace. **Amen.**

## Readings and Reflections

### Wednesday - When we need help to pray

February 17<sup>th</sup>

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

*Luke 11:1-2*

*Sometimes, we cannot find the words to express how we are feeling or know how to broach an issue with God. Jesus' advice is to turn to his Father in heaven and, recognising who he is - the One who has created all that is yet knows us better than we know ourselves - give thanks for this. Once we feel ourselves in his presence, everything that we want to say or silently express will flow as a stream. Reflect on your own prayer life at this time. How can Jesus' advice inspire your praying?*

### Thursday - Our time with God

February 18<sup>th</sup>

Jesus said, 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

'Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial,

but rescue us from the evil one.

*Matthew 6:7-13*

*Recognising God for who he is, and giving thanks and praise for this, fills us with the confidence to lift our needs up to him and to seek his guidance. He is listening to us, and will respond in love. The prayer that Jesus gave us encourages us to open up about our challenges. What is on your heart at this time?*

**Friday - God's love for us****February 19<sup>th</sup>**

Jesus lamented, saying 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."'

*Matthew 23:37-39*

*Jesus' delightful image of a mother hen gathering her brood of chicks into the safety of her wings reveals to us the depth of God's love and concern for us. It is so amazing that our Creator God wants to be a loving parent to us and yearns for us to feel that we can approach him at any time about anything, and he'll be there for us. Reflect on your relationship with God who is a Father to us. Offer him your love. Abide in his.*

**Saturday - God's unbreakable love****February 20<sup>th</sup>**

The younger son came to himself and said, "How many of my Father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

*Luke 15:17-20*

*Jesus' parable of the wayward younger son shows us that, like a father who keeps on loving his children even when they don't seem to love him, God never gives up on us. Nothing that we have done in the past can stop him loving us in the present or yearning for the best for us in the future. Give thanks for his unbreakable love.*

**Monday - Our Father (1)****February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

*Matthew 22:34-40*

*Jesus encourages us to pray to "Our Father" in heaven and to ask him to give us "our daily bread". Even when we are praying at home on our own, we still pray to "Our Father" not "My Father".*

*The Lord's Prayer reminds us that we are not praying on our own. Our voices are being joined with those of our church friends and Christians around the globe. And, when we pray, we do not pray just for ourselves. We are lifting up to God the needs of those we love - our family, friends and neighbours, and those whose heartache and struggles are on our hearts. We join our voices with theirs to raise their pleas to the Father we share. Reflect on what it means to pray "Our Father". How might this change how you pray the words Jesus taught us?*

**Tuesday - Our Father (2)**

**February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

*Colossians 1:15-20*

*When we say "Our Father", we are praying on behalf of the whole of Planet Earth, drawing the needs of all people and all living creatures into the circle of God's love. It is a prayer of embrace... of reconciliation... of healing for the whole of creation, made possible through Christ our King. Reflect on this image. Lift up your prayers for God's creation to the one who is our Father who listens.*

**Wednesday - Father?**

**February 24<sup>th</sup>**

Can a woman forget her nursing-child,  
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?  
Even these may forget,  
yet I will not forget you.  
See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands;  
your walls are continually before me.

*Isaiah 49:15-16*

*Calling God "Our Father" for most of us is a natural and loving thing to do. Sadly, for some, the word "father" is filled with pain and sadness. There are a variety of reasons why this might be so: some children grow up without a father, others have a father who is cruel to them, and others lose their father too soon in life. If you can, pray for those in our world who do not have a positive Father-like role model in their lives.*

## Thursday - Who art in heaven

February 25<sup>th</sup>

O Lord, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars that you have established;

what are human beings that you are mindful of them,

mortals that you care for them?

*Psalm 8:1, 3-4*

*When we look up into the night sky and see the countless stars, we begin to sense the vastness of God's creation. Above and beyond all this is God's dwelling place, which we call heaven. He feels beyond our reach - perfect... holy... wondrous. Yet, the name we have for him "Our Father" reveals his nearness too. As Psalm 139 says, 'Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.' Wherever we are, God is. Reflect on God's intimate vastness. And, give thanks!*

## Friday - Hallowed be thy name

February 26<sup>th</sup>

But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you":

This is my name for ever,

and this my title for all generations.

*Exodus 3:13-15*

*Soon after we are born our names are chosen for us. Names can reveal our family's hopes and dreams for us, connect us with much loved ancestors or simply be a sign of our parents' love for us. God's name is an enigmatic one: I am who I am. It is a sign of his holiness, power and freedom. Before time and through all time, he was - he is - he will be. As you contemplate this, give thanks for his unchanging love.*

## Saturday - Praying as Jesus prayed

February 27<sup>th</sup>

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

*Mark 1:35*

*We are at a turning point in the Lord's Prayer. Having centred ourselves on God who is our Father, we now need to tune into his desires for our world and our lives, and place ourselves into his hands. Reflect on the issues that you wish to raise to God's loving attention. What would Jesus say to his Father in heaven?*

## **PART TWO**

### **Earth**

#### **Preparation**

As you prepare to meet with God, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence and spend a little time gazing into its flickering flame. When you are ready, reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

My trust is in you, O Lord.

I have said, 'You are my God.'      *Psalm 31:14*

#### **Opening Prayer**

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,  
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,  
and through me.

**Amen.**

#### **Reading and Reflection**

*Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.*

#### **Our Prayer for this Week**

Almighty God,  
by the prayer and discipline of Lent  
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,  
and by following in his Way  
come to share in his glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father...

#### **Conclusion**

May God bless us, and fill us with the fruit of his Spirit:  
love and humility, patience and peace, generosity and kindness. **Amen.**



## Readings and Reflections

### Monday - On earth as in heaven

March 1<sup>st</sup>

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord;

be strong, and let your heart take courage;

wait for the Lord!

*Psalm 27:13-14*

*The psalmist could have been writing in our own times. We have had so much waiting to do in this coronavirus crisis. We have had to learn again to trust in God's power to perfect life on Planet Earth. By praying the Lord's Prayer, we are inviting God to enter into our brokenness and bring wholeness. And, we also celebrate everything that is good and loving, beautiful and life-affirming. Contemplate what you most need of God at this time and, as you do so, think of one thing that brings you joy in your life. Give thanks!*

### Tuesday - Seek God's kingdom

March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Jesus said, 'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.'

*Luke 11:9-10*

*When we think of God's Kingdom, we can be tempted to see this as something that will come into being in the future, perhaps, when Christ returns. Jesus is saying to us that the Kingdom is already here, has already begun. It is not yet finished or finalised, but glimpses of it can already be seen on earth. Where? In us, and others too, when we seek to live by Jesus' two great commandments: Love God - Love everyone as we love ourselves. Reflect on where you see signs of God's Kingdom. Ask God how you can better reflect his love in your daily life.*

### Wednesday - Live by his values

March 3<sup>rd</sup>

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;

and what does the Lord require of you

but to do justice, and to love kindness,

and to walk humbly with your God?

*Micah 6:8*

*If we think about how Jesus lived his life on earth, we see him removing the barriers and boundaries to human love and compassion. He went out of his way to speak to the friendless, to comfort and heal those seen as unclean, and to show kindness to those who had broken the rules. Ponder and pray about your own values.*

## Thursday - Kin-dom of God

March 4<sup>th</sup>

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

*Acts 2:43-47*

*In this season of social distancing, it is good to be reminded about how great life in all its fullness feels. The early Church in Jerusalem truly reflected God's Kingdom values. They were a loving and caring community. They ate and prayed together, and looked after those who were struggling. Everyone was valued for who they are - a child of God. Contemplate: Who is caring for you? Who are you blessing?*

## Friday - Thy Kingdom come...

March 5<sup>th</sup>

Jesus said. 'If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.'

*John 15:7-10*

*As we tune into the words that Jesus gave us, we find ourselves changing: we focus on our Father's love and holiness and, feeling held by him, seek to treat others with love and kindness, and thus we begin to contemplate God's Kingdom coming into the hurting parts of our world and our lives, and wiping away tears of frustration and sadness. Be still, and let God's peace still your worries. Let him in.*

## Saturday - Thy will be done

March 6<sup>th</sup>

Jesus came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.' Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.'

*Luke 22:39-42*

*Sometimes, praying "thy will be done" takes a huge amount of courage. Why? Because we know that the right thing to do is not going to be easy or because what God wants is far outside our comfort zone. It is then that we can draw on Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane, and pray knowing God will be with us. He'll never desert us. Reflect on how it feels to place your life in God's hands.*

## **PART THREE**

### **Bread**

#### **Preparation**

As you prepare to meet with God, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence and spend a little time gazing into its flickering flame. When you are ready, reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

O taste and see that the Lord is gracious;  
blessed is the one who trusts in him.     *Psalm 34:8*

#### **Opening Prayer**

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,  
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,  
and through me.

**Amen.**

#### **Reading and Reflection**

*Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.*

#### **Our Prayer for this Week**

Eternal God,  
give us insight  
to discern your will for us,  
to give up what harms us,  
and to see the perfection we are promised  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father...

#### **Conclusion**

May God bless us, and guide us in our daily living. **Amen.**

## Readings and Reflections

### Monday - More than bread...

March 8<sup>th</sup>

Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

*Deuteronomy 8:2-3*

*Bread is one of our staple foods. A go to item when we need to rustle up something to eat in a hurry. Yet - in the Bible, it is so much more than this. It is a sign of God's faithful provision during the wilderness years. It is a sign of the Son's promise to us, and the way he feeds us through the meal he gave us. We should not rely solely on our own resources but seek God's wise and loving words of guidance. Seek God's words of advice. Listen and be fed by him.*

### Tuesday - Food for everyone...

March 9<sup>th</sup>

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the Lord your God.

*Leviticus 23:22*

*We pray the Lord's Prayer for others as well as ourselves. When we say, 'Give us this day our daily bread.', we are recalling those in our villages and towns, across this nation and globe, who do not have enough food to eat. God invites us to be part of his loving response. As a benefice, we support the Daylight Centre's Foodbank. What else might you do? To give of what you have so that others can become self-supporting and/or hunger free?*

### Wednesday - Food for the journey...

March 10<sup>th</sup>

Elijah went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

*1 Kings 19:4-9*

*Our prayer for bread is a plea for what we need to journey well through tough times as well as the happier seasons of our lives. Elijah's life was in danger and he was ready to give in. God meets him in his brokenness and gives him the strength - spiritual and physical - to journey on. Contemplate: How is God feeding me?*

**Thursday - Trusting in God's provision**

**March 11<sup>th</sup>**

Jesus said, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?' *Matthew 6:25-27*

*Life in a time of coronavirus can be worrying. Asking God to give us this day what we need for today encourages us to focus on the coming hours. To ask ourselves, 'How will I journey well this day? Find a source of joy or hope?' And, trust in God's faithful and loving provision? Contemplate what you can see in your garden, and how God provides for the wildlife and plants to thrive. Place your trust in him.*

**Friday - Living with enough**

**March 12<sup>th</sup>**

Jesus said, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

*Matthew 6:19-21*

*Our prayer for daily bread is also a request for God's help in considering how much food to have in our store cupboards. Too much, and we are in danger of wasting God's provision. Too little, and we have to make extra trips to the shops, or place additional online orders, which is not good for our planet's wellbeing. Contemplate your approach. Seek God's help in learning to live with enough.*

**Saturday - Give thanks!**

**March 13<sup>th</sup>**

David said: 'Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, for ever and ever. Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. *1 Chronicles 29:10-11, 14b*

*Contemplate King David's words of praise and thanksgiving. All that we have is due to God's generous self-giving. Give thanks. And, wonder, 'How generous am I?'*

## **PART FOUR**

### **Forgiveness**

#### **Preparation**

As you prepare to meet with God, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence and spend a little time gazing into its flickering flame. When you are ready, reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and of great kindness.     *Psalm 103:8*

#### **Opening Prayer**

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,  
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,  
and through me.

**Amen.**

#### **Reading and Reflection**

*Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.*

#### **Our Prayer for this Week**

Merciful Lord,  
you know our struggle to serve you:  
when sin spoils our lives  
and overshadows our hearts,  
come to our aid  
and turn us back to you again;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father...

#### **Conclusion**

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love. **Amen.**

## Readings and Reflections

### Monday - As we forgive?

March 15<sup>th</sup>

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. *Matthew 18:21-22*

*"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" is, probably, the most challenge request in the Lord's Prayer. In some situations, forgiveness is the wrong thing to do. It can be dangerous as it gives permission to keep on hurting us. God does not expect us to forgive without justice, reconciliation and healing taking place.*

*Usually though, being forgiving is less challenging. It is to be ready and willing to forgive those who say sorry to us. By letting go of our anger, bitterness, resentment, we are set free to heal the breach in our relationship. Holding on to past hurts and frustrations can end up being a barrier to our prayer life, can come between God and us. Contemplate what it means to be forgiving. If you can, lift up to God any struggles you are facing.*

### Tuesday - God's forgiveness

March 16<sup>th</sup>

Jesus said, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

*We see the breadth and depth of God's love for us and his desire to forgive in Jesus' words as he is nailed to the cross.*

Then Jesus said,

'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'

*There is a wideness in God's mercy which embraces all of our sins. To be forgiven is to be set free to turn our lives around, to earn the forgiveness of those who we have hurt or saddened, and to seek to make amends for our mistakes. God's forgiveness is freely given yet it changes us. Consider your own response to God's forgiveness. Pray for his wisdom.*

### Wednesday - To trespass

March 17<sup>th</sup>

And forgive us our sins;

for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

*Luke 11:4a*

*Our request to be forgiven our trespasses comes from the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible refers to our sins or indebtedness. Yet, trespass can be a helpful idea to explore as we think about what needs to be forgiven. In farming terms, to trespass is to walk across a field even though there is no right of way or footpath.*

*Usually, we leave little or no lasting traces. It is easy to forgive or be forgiven when there's no real harm done. If we are the one who's trod on someone else's feelings, we resolve to be more careful and considerate next time. If we keep on trespassing, a path will form. Damage has been done that will need time to heal. So, in life, when we keep on repeating or building on past mistakes. Forgiveness becomes a journey rather than a one-off exchange. Contemplate this idea of 'trespass' and, if you can, lift up to God's love and compassion your own faults and failings.*

**Thursday - Receiving God's forgiveness (1)**

**March 18<sup>th</sup>**

Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.' *Luke 23:42-43*

*It is Good Friday and Jesus is on the cross. One of the criminals recognises Jesus for who he is - the Messiah - and becomes the first to receive God's gift of salvation. How this must have eased his dying moments. He has been forgiven by Jesus, and welcomed into God's Kingdom. Set free to receive life after death. God forgives - freely - we just need to turn to him in penitence and faith. Contemplate this and consider what it takes for you to forgive.*

**Friday - Receiving God's forgiveness (2)**

**March 19<sup>th</sup>**

Out of pity for him, the lord of the slave released him and forgave him the debt.

*Matthew 18:27*

*In the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, the first slave owes an impossible debt. He could never repay it in his lifetime. Yet - seeing his fear for himself and his family, the king forgives him. Sets him free to live again. God sets us free to live loving, caring and compassionate lives. Nothing can separate us from his love. Nothing! Give thanks to God for his grace and mercy. How might you be gracious too?*

**Saturday - Forgive as you are forgiven**

**March 20<sup>th</sup>**

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. *Matthew 18:28-30*

*How does the first slave in Jesus' parable use his freedom? To inflict violence on a fellow-slave. With his actions far outweighing the original trespass, now, he is more in need of forgiveness than the one who owes him about three months' wages. Forgiving someone who is 'indebted' to us can stop us from falling into sin. Ponder when this has been true in your life. Pray for those who are struggling to let go.*



## **PART FIVE**

### **Temptation**

#### **Preparation**

As you prepare to meet with God, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence and spend a little time gazing into its flickering flame. When you are ready, reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my thoughts. *Psalm 139:23*

#### **Opening Prayer**

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,  
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,  
and through me.

**Amen.**

#### **Reading and Reflection**

*Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.*

#### **Our Prayer for this Week**

Gracious Father,  
you gave up your Son  
out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father...

#### **Conclusion**

May God bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## Readings and Reflections

### Monday - Temptation!

March 22<sup>nd</sup>

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

*Genesis 2:15-17*

*Temptation is all around us in life. We have to learn to live with it. And seek God's help to resist rather than give in. It's why one of the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 is 'self-control'. It is a sign that, when we call on his assistance to strengthen our resolve, God will be there for us. What temptations are you facing in this season of your life? Contemplate how God might guide you in your struggles.*

### Tuesday - Recognising our weaknesses

March 23<sup>rd</sup>

Then Jesus came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

*Matthew 26:40-46*

*The Garden of Gethsemane is filled with temptation. Jesus is being tempted to avoid the agony of the cross, and - through prayer - resists. His Father strengthens his resolve. Whereas, we see Peter, James and John giving in and falling asleep on the job! And, Judas - waiting in the wings - who put his personal ambitions before Jesus' friendship and God's desires. All four of them failed in their prayer life. Reflect on your own prayer life and how it strengthens and directs your daily living.*

### Wednesday - Listen!

March 24<sup>th</sup>

Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman, saying, 'Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean.' But he became angry and went away, saying, 'I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?' He turned and went away in a rage. But his servants approached and said to him, 'Father, if the

prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, “Wash, and be clean”?’ So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

*2 Kings 5:10-14*

*Naaman is a Syrian who has found favour with God. One of his servants suggests that he seek the prophet Elisha’s help in curing his leprosy. Whilst he has the faith to do this, when he is told to go and wash and be clean, he feels that this is beneath his status. He is tempted to walk away. Until, his servants gently advise him to go and do as Elisha has commanded. Reflect on the times when your friends have spoken wise words of encouragement. How might you be a positive voice?*

**Thursday - Don’t listen!**

**March 25<sup>th</sup>**

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’

*Matthew 16:21-23*

*Quite naturally, Peter wants to keep Jesus safe. Out of loving concern, he speaks words of temptation to his teacher and friend. And, Jesus has to say a firm, ‘No!’ Contemplate how you discern God’s still small voice.*

**Friday - Listen to God’s voice**

**March 26<sup>th</sup>**

The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “One does not live by bread alone.”’

*Luke 4:3-4*

*When Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, he turns to Scripture for words of resistance. Reflect on your pattern of Bible reading. Can you hear God’s voice?*

**Saturday - Growing through temptation**

**March 27<sup>th</sup>**

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

*James 1:2-4*

*We grow through the trials and temptations of life. We build up the faith, strength and courage to live as God desires. Reflect on how you have grown through life.*

## PART SIX

### Glory

#### Preparation

As you prepare to meet with God, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence and spend a little time gazing into its flickering flame. When you are ready, reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.     *Psalm 34:1*

#### Opening Prayer

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,  
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,  
and through me.

**Amen.**

#### Reading and Reflection

*Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.*

#### Our Prayer for this Week

Eternal God,  
in the cross of Jesus  
we see the cost of our sin  
and the depth of your love:  
in humble hope and fear  
may we place at his feet  
all that we have and all that we are,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

#### Conclusion

May Christ, who bore our sins on the cross,  
set us free to serve him with joy. **Amen.**

## Readings and Reflections

### Monday - Be still, for the glory is shining all around

March 29<sup>th</sup>

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. *Exodus 34:29*

*Spending forty days in God's glorious presence must have been an amazing experience. When Moses returns to normal life, his face is aglow and keeps on glowing until it gradually fades. Ponder how your faith fills you with happiness, brings joy into your life. Give thanks to God for his loving presence.*

### Tuesday - Power of Love

March 30<sup>th</sup>

Jesus said, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

*John 14:15-17*

*In the Gospel of John, we see Jesus abiding in his Father's love. More than once Jesus says, 'Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' God's love the power to herald his Kingdom in. By sending his Spirit to his disciples, he gave them the strength to abide in his Father's love and build his Church. Pause to abide in God's love and feel his Spirit's presence. Re-charge your batteries.*

### Wednesday - Power to Silence

March 31<sup>st</sup>

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away. *Matthew 22:15-22*

*Jesus faced much opposition during his earthly ministry. Time and time again, critics asked questions designed to trip him up. Through his focus on God's values, he silenced them.*

*His answer reminds us of David's words, 'All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.' He is saying, 'Forget about the ways of the world, what does God desire and deserve?' 'Everything!' should be our loving response. God's wisdom and his glorious love for us - his children - has the power to silence doubts. Contemplate your response to God's love as the cross comes close.*

**Thursday - Power to Serve**

**April 1<sup>st</sup>**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

*John 13:1-5*

*God's Son had the power to give up his status and become like us. He came - not for earthly glory - but to show the power of God's love by serving the hurting. Jesus, at his final meal with them, could kneel at his friends' feet and wash them. It is a gloriously humble act of loving service. Contemplate how wonderful life on earth would be if we all tried to follow his example. Pray for the gift of loving humility.*

**Friday - Power of Presence**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.'

*John 19:8-11*

*It is Good Friday and Jesus is on trial for his life. Yet - he uses the power of silence to show who is in charge here: God! His bodily presence speaks of his Father's glory. Ponder the events of Good Friday. Where is God's power and glory seen?*

**Saturday - Amen!**

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'

*Luke 1:38*

*Mary's "Amen" heralds the Son's coming that led to the cross. Contemplate the power of letting God be God as you wait in silence for the new life Easter brings.*