

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 8 February 2026
2nd Sunday before Lent**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Today, we begin to prepare for the start of Lent. This year, as Easter is early, we only have two Sundays in which to do this. Our Gospel reading reminds us of God's generous way of providing for us. We can rely on him.

Enjoy pondering God's generous and gracious love.

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to ponder this week's Gospel reading, take a moment to think about how God provides for his creation. If you can, look the window for signs of the new life of Spring.



Lord of beauty, thine the splendour
shown in earth and sky and sea,
burning sun and moonlight tender,
hill and river, flower and tree:
lest we fail our praise to render
touch our eyes that they may see.

Cyril Argentine Alington (1872-1955)

**Prayers and Reflections
for the 2nd Sunday before Lent
Generous Providing**

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,
I place my hopes and dreams,
my fears and concerns,
into your safe and loving hands.
Enfold me with your love,
make my heart beat in time with yours;
in Jesus' name,
I pray. **Amen.**

LETTING GO

If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, reflect on the words of this second verse.

Lord of wisdom, whom obeying
mighty waters ebb and flow,
while unhasting, undelaying,
planets on their courses go:
in thy laws thyself displaying,
teach our minds thyself to know.

Cyril Argentine Alington (1872-1955)



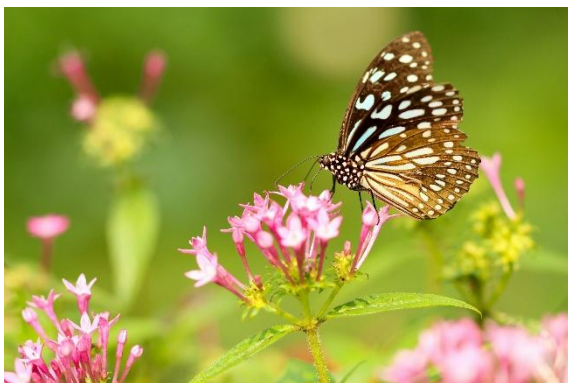
If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.

Feel God's forgiveness.

Our second verse invites us to ponder the order that is at the heart of God's creation – all that is above us in the night skies, all that preserves life on earth and all that keeps our world safely turning. Nature obeys God's voice and his laws. It feels like it is only the human race who has the freedom to listen or to ignore, to obey or to reject his call on our lives. We can choose to love God in every aspect of our lives or deny him. We can choose to love family and friends, neighbours and strangers or carelessly hurt them. Every day we make little and big choices. How do yours reflect God's laws of love and kindness, peace and fairness?

Inspired by the last line of our verse, where we ask God to teach us to know him, ponder how you listen to God's still small voice... how you spot where he is at work in your life... how you notice his generous providing for your daily needs. Can you see any gaps in what you do to stay close to God and be thankful for generous and gracious love?

When you are ready, give thanks for God's generosity of love and care as you enjoy this third verse.



Lord of life, alone sustaining
all below and all above,
Lord of love, by whose ordaining
sun and stars sublimely move:
in our earthly spirits reigning,
lift our hearts that we may love.

Cyril Argentine Alington (1872-1955)

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across the benefice and the globe.

Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God of life and love.

Almighty God,
give us reverence for all creation
and respect for every person,
that we may mirror your likeness
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer flows beautifully on from our last verse. It is a call to love – love God's creation and respect all creatures and habitats and peoples, because God loves all that he has made. All was created to be good – very good. When we look at the life that is all around us, we are looking at God's handiwork. We are sensing God's creative powers.

We hear again God's commission. The gift of freewill comes at a price, which is to care for his creation as he does.

Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image,
in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea
and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,
and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

One word in this passage can tempt us to think that the world is ours, we can do what we wish. The word is 'rule'. To rule is to be in charge, absolute charge. All the underlings must do their ruler's – their leader's – bidding. But this is not what it means to rule like God rules. God's rule is seen in his love and care for his creation and all his creatures, and in the generous way that he provides for their needs. He calls us to do the same and be gentle and generous.

By doing this, we glorify the one who made us in his image. We are sensitive and alert to his love for every person – every creature – every living thing. We share in this love.

Ponder how your love echoes his. Seek his help in mirroring his likeness, daily. Praise him with this final verse.



Lord of beauty, bid us own thee,
Lord of truth, our footsteps guide,
till as Love our hearts enthrone thee,
and, with vision purified,
Lord of all, when all have known thee,
thou in all art glorified.

Cyril Argentine Alington (1872-1955)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Do not worry

Jesus said, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

'And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:25-34

God provides...

When life feels full of trouble or the future feels uncertain, this is a go to passage. This part of our Lord's sermon feels like a meditation. Jesus begins by inviting us to look outside and spot the wild birds in our garden. Tiny creatures, weighing less than an ounce, who rely on gardens, woods, fields and hedgerows for the food to survive and to bring up their chicks. He is saying, 'Notice how God loves these robins and blue tits and wrens. See how he provides for them season by season.' If God cares this deeply for these beautiful creatures, consider how deeply he cares for you. Ponder how well he knows you.

Before a word is on our lips, God senses how we are feeling. He knows our joys and our troubles. He knows our deepest needs. Jesus invites us to place our trust in him. When life feels difficult, he says, 'Learn to take one step at a time believing that God is at your side. Try not to worry about tomorrow. Focus only on today, knowing that God has the future, yours and everyone's in his hands.'

How will you make the most of today? Find joy in life as it is today, knowing that God provides? His love is generous and gracious, unbreakable and unending. You can say anything to him. He will listen, understanding why you are saying what you are saying. His love can give you or a loved one the strength to live today as best as possible.

May this verse fill you with hope – a trusting hope. God provides.



Green pastures are before me,
which yet I have not seen;
bright skies will soon be o'er me,
where darkest clouds have been;
my hope I cannot measure,
my path to life is free;
my Saviour has my treasure,
and he will walk with me.

Anna Laetitia Waring (1823-1910)

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, you faced many troubles on your journey to the Cross.
In the Garden of Gethsemane, you asked for your Father's help,
and he renewed your resolve. Lord, help me to trust in his providing...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, our world is filled with millions and billions of people,
old and young, poor and rich – we are all your Father's beloved children.
Lord, may the world's frightened ones feel that he cares... he provides...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you loved your followers. You knew each one of them,
all their flaws and their fears. You asked your Father to keep them safe.
Lord, I think of my friends and their worries. Be their source of hope...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

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.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**