

# **Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone**



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 5 October 2025  
Trinity 16**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Our Gospel reading, this week, contains a request and two puzzling responses - one on faith, the other on gratitude for all that God does for us and through us. You may find yourself focusing on either faith or gratitude, or feel drawn to both of our Lord's related responses.

May our Lord's ideas refresh your Spirit and inspire your daily living.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to ponder our Lord's thoughts on faith and gratitude, invite his Spirit to come and stir your soul.*



O thou who camest from above  
the fire celestial to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home on Trinity 16  
Faith and Gratitude**

**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 next verse.*

There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*



*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.*

*Does this verse remind you of your childhood days when homes were heated by coal fires? It does me. Our home was heated by a coal fire in our living room. It had a back boiler which provided hot water during the wintry months. I can still picture dad clearing out the previous day's ashes before placing a fire lighter and some kindling in the grate, then striking a match and watching as the flames took hold. Carefully, dad would add the coal and logs, taking care not to smother the embryonic fire. Throughout the day, we had to keep watch on the fire. If we didn't, it would dwindle to a cooling pile of grey ash. Dad would have to begin the process again.*

*If this image is a metaphor for our relationship with God, where do you find yourself today? Burning brightly? In need of stoking? Cooling? Ready for re-lighting? Prayerfully ponder this and then call on God's Spirit as you sing or say this opening verse from Come down, O Love divine.*



Come down, O Love divine,  
seek thou this soul of mine,  
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

*Bianco da Siena (d. 1434), trans. Richard F. Littledale (1833-1890)*

## **PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER (The Collect)**

*Across our villages and the worldwide Church, this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God whose love is unbreakable.*

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us:  
open our eyes to your wonders,  
that we may serve you with reverence  
and know your peace at our lives' end,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



*Our prayer to God to increase our faith starts, quite naturally, with God, with God and all of his glorious works. God invites us to look upwards, outwards, and wonder at the vastness of the universe, the diversity of life which is all around us, and the depth of life that is within us. Do you find that to look at creation is to feel connected with our Creator? I do.*

*When I am transfixed by the beauty of nature, my heart sings. I feel God is and sense his Spirit's presence around me and within me. I am filled with joy and awe and reverence. My soul echoes these words from this truly uplifting prayer. As you ponder its words, think about the everyday sights and sounds that lift your soul heavenwards in heartfelt praise.*

I thank you, O God, for the pleasures you have given me  
through my senses; for the glory of thunder,  
for the mystery of music, the singing of birds  
and the laughter of children.

I thank you for the delights of colour, the awe of sunset,  
the wild roses in hedgerows,  
the smile of friendship.

I thank you for the sweetness of flowers  
and the scent of hay.

Truly, O Lord, the earth is full of your riches!

**Amen.**

*Edward King (1829-1910)*

*To have faith is to find ourselves in a place of joyous or humble gratitude for all of our God-given blessings. Truly, O Lord, our lives and the earth is full of your riches. Faith with gratitude should inspire us to live for Jesus, to serve him through all that we do and say as be.*



Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work and speak and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire  
and still stir up the gift in me.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

## LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

### Increase our faith!

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!'

He replied, 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it will obey you.

Suppose one of you has a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, "Come along now and sit down to eat"? Won't he rather say, "Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink"? Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have done only our duty."

*Luke 17:5-10*

### Living with faith and gratitude...

*I wonder why the apostles made this request of Jesus, 'Increase our faith!' What had happened to make them feel that their faith was not strong enough for the job they are doing? Or, perhaps, for what lies before them as Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem? Had they failed in a recent mission? Had they faced some tough opposition which caused them to stumble in their trust in Jesus as their way and their truth, and their life? Or, simply, did they recognise how weak their faith is compared to the living, witnessing faith of Jesus?*

*To recognise our need for faith is to receive this gift through our Lord's Spirit within us. We don't need to tell an oak tree to get out of our way to prove to ourselves that God is for us. We do have to believe that God is with us even when we are going through the toughest of times. We do have to trust in his loving responses to our prayers even when what we are seeking feels impossible. He will give what is right for us.*

*He has already given of his very self - his Son.*

*Like the apostles, all we need is faith - a true faith fuelled by gratitude, gratitude for all that God has given us and all that Jesus has done for us, and for all of his Spirit's energizing of our lives.*

*Jesus could have stopped there, with his response about the power of even the smallest of faiths to transform lives. But, he doesn't. He offers the parable of the 'unworthy' servant. To our earthly eyes, the servant does not appear to be lazy, useless or unworthy. He has worked hard in the fields and then come in to prepare his master's supper before sitting down to his own. At first glance, it sounds like God is less than grateful for our loving service. Our good seems to be not good enough for him. How should we understand this? Well, a perfect place to begin with is Jesus, our Servant King. He came not to be served but to serve, giving his all for his Father and for us, and that is our calling too: to love and serve God with every fibre of our being and our neighbours as ourselves.*

*When we come to our life's end and find ourselves in heaven, I wonder, will we look back at our lives with a different perspective? Will we see all of the loving service that we did as small in comparison to God's gifts to us - our planet home, our life and everyone we have loved in this life, our life beyond his life, and a faith that enables us to navigate this life? Will we feel less than worthy compared to the God who is before us, knowing that we could have done more for him? Yes, this is quite possible because it is impossible to praise God enough! Or, serve him as much as he loves and serves us. But, I am sure that we will be also - in the words of Charles Wesley - lost in wonder, love, and praise. For God is amazing! May our Lord's parable expand our love for him and deepen our desire to serve him every day of our lives.*



Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

## OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you gave your whole self in love and in service,  
both to your Father and to the world you came to save.  
Your selfless giving fills me with gratitude. Receive, Lord, my praise...  
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you call us to serve your kingdom of love and peace,  
justice and fairness. To love our neighbours is to act with kindness,  
and seek their wellbeing. Lord, as a human race, we are failing in this...  
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, your selfless giving makes our love and service seem so little  
compared to all that you have done for us. In workplaces, being seen as  
'unworthy' of a role can be crushing. Lord, restore the broken in Spirit...  
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.**