

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

Sunday 19 April 2026

Easter 3

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. Our Gospel reading shows us what Jesus does when we give up on him. He comes to find us! Today, we will walk the dusty road to Emmaus with a dejected Cleopas and his companion, and a mysterious stranger who is the risen Jesus.

Enjoy stepping into this story of losing and finding.

God bless,

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*As you prepare to walk this path with Cleopas and the risen Jesus,
seek to stay close to him.*



O for a closer walk with God,
a calm and heavenly frame,
a light that shines upon the road,
leading to the Lamb.

*William Cowper (1723-1800)
adapted by Keith Getty
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Prayers and Reflections for use at home on Easter 3 Losing and Finding

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love. You may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in this 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.

Risen Lord Jesus,
as I prepare to spend this time in worship,
I invite you to come and fill this space,
and my inner stillness,
with your presence.

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, when you are ready, reflect on the second verse of this week's hymn.

Where is the blessedness I knew,
when I once saw the Lord?
Where is the soul refreshing view
living in his word?

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

Feel the Father's forgiveness.

Our verse is an invitation to ponder our personal walk with the risen Jesus. Its words portray a sense of lostness. At times in our life, our Lord can seem to be distant from us. In reality, he isn't missing. It is just that we are finding it hard to tune our hearts into him. As when we find it hard to get to sleep, we can't quite still mind or rekindle that special moment when God feels present all around us. It is a verse of yearning to be close to Jesus and to receive of his love and his wisdom.

We find a similar yearning in Psalm 42. The psalmist is aching to be close to God, but the LORD feels far from him.

As the deer longs for the water brooks,
so longs my soul for you, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, even the living God;
when shall I come before the presence of God?
My tears have been my bread day and night,
while all day long they say to me, "Where is now your God?"
Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul,
and why are you so disquieted within me?
O put your trust in God;
for I will yet give him thanks,
who is the help of my countenance,
and my God.

Psalm 42:1-3, 6-7

How does this psalm speak of your own walk with the risen Jesus?

Your trust in him even when you can't feel his presence?

What are you seeking from him?

In stillness, pray for this.

May this verse be your soul's response.

The Lord will grant his loving-kindness in the daytime;
through the night his song will be with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

Psalm 42:10

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across our villages and the worldwide Church. Add your voice to the earthly cycle of prayer to our risen Lord who always listens to our prayers.

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

On Easter Day, Jesus did fill his disciples with fresh joy and hope. At dawn, as the day began, each of his friends and followers were in deep shock, grieving for the loss of the one who had been such a constant in their life, Jesus. How can God's Messiah be dead? What did Jesus mean when, on the road to Jerusalem, he said that he would rise on day three? Jesus comes as a spiritual superglue to heal their brokenness.

Seeing the risen Jesus filled his team with renewed strength, confidence and courage. All that they had been through – tough as it was – equipped, steadied and prepared them for what was to come – flying solo as builders of our Lord's Church. The same can be true for us. We can grow through our times of failure – challenge – suffering – loss.

Ponder how our Lord has helped you grow close to him in the tough times so that you could live the rest of your life more fully or boldly.



A light to be my guide,
the Father's presence at my side.
In your will my rest I find.
O for a closer walk with God,
leading to the Lamb.

William Cowper (1723-1800)

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LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

On the road to Emmaus

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising him.

He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?'

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?'

'What things?' he asked.

'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.'

He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us,

for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.’ So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, ‘It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.’ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.

Luke 24:13-35

Losing and Finding...

Cleopas and his companion have given up and are going home. Like Mary Magdalene on first seeing the empty tomb, they can't believe that this is a powerful sign of a new beginning. For them, Jesus died on the cross – finito. They have lost Jesus. They have lost hope. Not even the angel's message, 'He is not here. He is risen!', can keep them in Jerusalem.

I find what Jesus does next so moving. He doesn't give up on Cleopas. No, he goes out of his way to find him and his companion. When he catches up with them, he doesn't say, 'Ta dah! It's me! I'm back!' No, he walks at their pace all the way to Emmaus. What a generous and gentle way of rounding up his lost sheep! He would do the same for us. Ponder this.



So shall my walk be close with God
with all the hopes made new.
So purer light shall mark the road
leading to the Lamb.

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OUR PRAYERS

Here are some Eastertide prayers. Feel free to add your own.

Risen Lord, thank you for your deep love for me,
and for all the time you give to me. You are always willing to go
out of your way for me. When I feel lost, you come to me. I thank you...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Risen Lord, Cleopas and his companion were struggling to cope with
all that had happened to you. They felt like giving up. Come,
Lord, and find those who are overwhelmed by events. I pray for...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Risen Lord, you came and walked with Cleopas, you listened to his fears
and spoke the right words to him. You lighted his heart with hope.
Come, Lord, and speak to those who are in pain. I lift up to you...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and praise.

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.

Risen Lord, come and meet me where I am,
this Eastertide. Fill me with love and joy and peace,
so that I may offer your hope to others.

Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**