

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



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 19 January 2025  
Epiphany 2**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. This week, we find ourselves at the well-known wedding in Cana. It is where Jesus performed his first sign: turning water into wine. Only God can do this, and so this sign encourages us to wonder about who Jesus is. The wine invites us to ponder the abundance of God's love.

Enjoy attending this wedding!

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to attend this famous wedding reception,  
offer your praise to our Father in heaven for the gift of life and love,  
and for his glorious creation.*



Father, Lord of all creation,  
ground of all being, life and love;  
height and depth beyond description  
only life in you can prove:  
you are mortal life's dependence:  
thought, speech, sight are ours by grace;  
yours is every hour's existence,  
sovereign Lord of time and space.

*Stewart Cross (1928-1989)*

*(not for copying)*

**Prayers and Reflections**  
**for use at home *for* Epiphany 2**  
**God's abundance**

**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, when you are ready, reflect on our Lord's love and care.*

Jesus Christ, the Man for others,  
we, your people, make our prayer:  
help us love - as sisters, brothers -  
all whose burdens we can share.  
Where your name binds us together  
you, Lord Christ, will surely be;  
where no selfishness can sever  
there your love the world may see.

*Stewart Cross (1928-1989)*  
*(not for copying)*



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

*The prayer that our Lord taught us to say invites his Father to:*

*And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

*I love the way that we pray 'forgive us our trespasses' as the vast majority of our sins involve us hurting someone's feelings. Sin is not a victimless crime. It is that part of our life together which is in need of our Lord's healing love and redemption. We seek forgiveness as brothers and sisters of each other and of our Lord Jesus. Our verse invites us to see that it is through his love and his loving example that we will become as one both as a human race and as God's creation.*

*Who is our Lord inviting you to love?*

*Whose burdens might you ease by your kind words,  
or your thoughtful actions?*

*Ponder how this would make a difference to life where you live. Offer this to our Lord in prayer and promise.*

## **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 circle of prayer to our God on high.*

Eternal Lord,  
our beginning and our end:  
bring us with the whole creation  
to your glory, hidden through past ages  
and made known  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Epiphany is all about God revealing his glorious nature through Jesus, his very own Son. Why? As our prayer says, God wants to draw everyone, and the whole of his creation, into the circle of his love. As the Lord's Prayer says, God wants us to pray and to act so that 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' It is an abundant sign of God's love for us and for all of his creation.*

*God is inviting us to dream dreams of what our world will look like when everyone lives with this desire in their hearts.*

*It is a call to each one of us who loves Jesus as our Lord and King and who strives to live by his teaching to do what little we can to make this dream come true.*

*You might like to ponder this with the prayer of St. Francis.*

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is discord, union;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light.

**Amen.**

*Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)*

*The final verse of our Epiphany hymn is a glorious invitation to make God's love known through us.*



Holy Spirit, rushing, burning  
wind and flame of Pentecost,  
fill our hearts afresh with yearning  
to regain what we have lost.  
May your love unite our action,  
never more to speak alone:  
God, in us abolish faction,  
God, through us your love make known. *Stewart Cross*

*(not for copying)*

## LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

### The Wedding at Cana

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'

His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from eighty to a hundred and twenty litres.

Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water'; so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.'

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, 'Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.'

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

*John 2:1-11*

### God's abundance...

*In the Lord's Prayer, we pray 'Give us this day our daily bread.' We say this for ourselves - give me today what I need to survive and thrive - and we pray this for those across the globe who do not have enough.*

*If, like me, you have more than enough to live on, it is a lesson in fairness, and sharing, and in reducing our consumption for the sake of God's creation. It is a call to be satisfied with enough - for today and tomorrow, and all of our tomorrows, so that we tread more gently through life. It is a lesson in caring for those who do not have enough to live on by wanting to see fairness in the sharing of the world's resources. It is a call to be a part of God's solution to this age old problem.*

*As you ponder this, think about where you have enough to live on, e.g. food and clothes, and where you can cope with less or need more to stay warm and fed, loved and safe. Offer your prayer for enough - seeking God's will for your surplus or your deficits.*

*Pray for those who do not have enough.*

*Our Gospel reading shows us the other side of the coin. 'God's Abundance' is a major theme in the Gospels. God takes our deficits, and replaces them with his abundance. A child's picnic feeds 5,000 people with plenty to spare. Fishermen who have no fish catch so many that nets start breaking. Wedding guests who have already drunk enough are given a super abundance of the finest of wines. 150 gallons of fine wine was way more than was needed to save the host's blushes.*

*Jesus' first sign of who he is - one who can transform plain water into vintage wine - reveals two things. Firstly, like his Father in heaven, he is one who speak and creation responds. It is a first glimpse of Jesus as God's beloved Son. Secondly, it shows the super abundance of God's love for us. Life is God's wondrous gift to us. Our Lord is inviting us to enjoy it to the full with him. Not by getting drunk (no!), but by sharing the abundance of his love and care with those around us.*

*His feast is for everyone. All have a place at his banquet on earth as well as in heaven. Do raise a glass - or prayer - to this!*

## OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you came to offer life in all its fullness to everyone, a life lived with you and all of your brothers and sisters across the globe. Help me, Lord, to share the abundance of your love with...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to teach us to be satisfied with enough, so that all may live. It is a lesson that we are still learning. Help us, Lord, in the richer nations to share what we have with...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you taught us to pray 'Give us this day our daily bread.' 'Bread' can be the food that we need to survive and thrive, or it can be the love and care we need to cope with life. Lord, I pray this for...

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.**