

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 18 January 2026
Epiphany 2**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. This week, John the Baptist reveals that Jesus is 'the Lamb of God'. It is an image rich with Old Testament meaning. It also has a clear connection to one of the wise men's gifts – myrrh for sacrifice.

Enjoy pondering this Epiphany revelation.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to contemplate this week's image of who Jesus is,
pause to praise our Saviour King.*



Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne;
hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own:
awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

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Lamb of God

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 God's sacrifice in sending his Son to us.

Crown him the Virgin's Son,
the God incarnate born,
whose arm those crimson trophies won
which now his brow adorn;
fruit of the mystic Rose,
as of that Rose the Stem,
the Root, whence mercy ever flows,
the Babe of Bethlehem.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)



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

This beautiful verse connects Jesus to God and to David's line, and to the sacrifice that he will make on the cross. Our verse offers three epiphanies as to who Jesus is – his lineage. 'The God incarnate born' tells us that Jesus is God in human form – his own Son. 'The mystic Rose' is a lovely mediaeval title for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Rose is a symbol of purity and of beauty. It is a wondrous title for the one who had the quiet faith and gentle courage to say, 'Yes, let it be to me.' This Rose is grafted onto 'the Root' of Jesse – the father of King David's line. It both speaks of Joseph – the stepdad of Jesus – and of how Jesus will fulfil the promises made by God to his people. The Messiah – their Saviour King – will be of David's line. Take a moment to reflect on this threefold revelation.



This is who Jesus is.

Our verse also offers the image of the crown of thorns and of the hands pierced with nails. This is what it means for Jesus to be the Lamb of God.

Offer your heartfelt praise and prayers with this next verse.



Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified:
no angel in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward casts each burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

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 see God more clearly and understanding his loving purpose more deeply through Jesus, his Son. The image of Jesus as the Lamb of God speaks to how dearly God wants to draw all creation into his circle of love. To do this, God the Father was willing to watch on – powerless – as his own Son sacrifices his life on the cross. It goes to the very heart of who God is. I invite you to ponder this as you read this well-known verse.

For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him
shall not perish
but have eternal life.

John 3:16

We begin to see that the sacrifice of the cross was needed to save us from our sins – our faults and failures – that would otherwise separate us from God's love and from the person we might be. It is an image which points to the Old Testament practice of sacrificing a lamb as a sin offering.

We are drawing close to John's revelation of Jesus as 'the Lamb of God'. Before you turn to our Gospel reading, ponder the power of Jesus, our Saviour King, to bring peace on earth through his sacrifice.



Crown him the Lord of peace,
whose power a sceptre sways
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
absorbed in prayer and praise:
his reign shall know no end,
and round his piercèd feet
fair flowers of paradise extend
their fragrance ever sweet.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

The Lamb of God

The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.'

Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One.'

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!'

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What do you want?'

They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?'

'Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.'

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).

John 1:29-42

Witnessing to the Lamb of God...

Did you notice this phrase in our Gospel reading. Twice, John says, 'I myself did not know him...'. For it was God who revealed to John who the long-awaited Messiah is – Jesus, his own cousin. God spoke directly to John and John testified to this truth. Jesus is the Lamb of God – one who is both greater than him and before him.

It is a sacrificial image. Lambs were slaughtered in the temple as a sin offering – to seek God's forgiveness. Each family slaughtered a lamb, annually at the Passover, to remember how God had set them free from slavery in Egypt. No one lamb could save them from their future sins. Each year countless lambs were slain. Yet, still, God's people failed in their love of God and of their neighbours. Sin kept on separating them from the God who loves them.

Jesus came to break the cycle. He came to bring peace and to unite everyone within the circle of God's love. How will you witness to this?



Crown him the Lord of years,
the Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you came to unite and bring peace to those who felt far from God's love. You were willing to suffer and die so that I might know the depth of your Father's love. Lord, I love you...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to wipe away all this world's sins, to cleanse and heal all our brokenness. You are our Prince of Peace. You see what is happening. Speak, Lord, to those who are causing pain in...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to be with those who felt broken, broken by their mistakes, broken by ill-health. You feel our pain, you see our suffering. Speak, Lord, to those who are struggling with...
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.**