

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



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 15 March 2026
Mothering Sunday**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. Today, we pause our Lenten pilgrimage to give thanks to God for our mums and, also, for all who have been like a mum to us. It might be a special day when you are showered with gifts. For some of us, it's a day full of joy and love, and happy memories. For others of us, perhaps, it can be a difficult time, we still miss our mum... we would have loved to have been a mum... we know the unbearable pain of losing a child... there are so many reasons why this day can be overshadowed with sadness.

May these prayers and reflections meet you where you are, and also help you to hold all mums and would-be mums on your heart as God holds you on his.

God bless,

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As you set out into these Mothering Sunday prayers and reflections, I invite you to recall those - past and present - who have blessed your life with their love.



Our Father God in heaven
on whom our world depends,
to you let praise be given
for families and friends;
for parents, sisters, brothers,
a home where love belongs,
but on this day for mothers
we bring our thankful songs.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

CCLI reported

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home
A Mother's Love

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.

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,
I place my hopes and dreams,
my fears and concerns,
into your safe and caring hands.
Pour out your love upon me,
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, when you are ready, reflect on the second verse of our hymn. Feel God's call to all mothers to be a source of loving inspiration.

What wealth of God's bestowing
for all the world to share!
what strength of heart outgoing
to children everywhere!
Our deepest joys and sorrows
a mother's path must trace,
and earth's unknown tomorrows
are held in her embrace.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

CCLI reported



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

Feel God's love and forgiveness. You are one of his beloved children. You are always on his heart.

Our Mothering Sunday hymn is inviting us to look at the role of mothers within our communities. A mother's love does not just bless her children and wider family. It is a blessing to those whose lives she touches with her love and wisdom. Think of the conversations at Tots & Carers groups, at the school gates or on WhatsApp groups, and the words of advice to exhausted new mums. Mothers are a blessing.

If you are a mum, think about how your love has helped other parents, children or families. Think about how your motherly wisdom has been a source of strength to others and/or a source of inspiration as you pray for the world today. Being a mum is a much wider role that we think. Your being a mum touches so many lives.

If you are not a mum, think about the mums in your life or community. Think about how their motherly love and skills is a blessing to others – at their children's school or at work, at home or at the groups they are involved in. Being a mum has changed their path through life.

Take a moment to think of your own mum and who she is or was because she is your mum. Think of the blessings that are her loving legacies.

**What is a mother,
she is...**

AMAZING

LOVING

PATIENT

HONEST

BEAUTIFUL

STRONG

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across the globe. Add your voice to the earthly cycle of prayer to our Father who loves and listens.

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Flowing beautifully on from who a mother us, this prayer invites us to ponder how God is a perfect parent, displaying the qualities we see in the very best of mums. He ticks all of the boxes. Think about the different aspects of his love and his loving nature. Who do you need him to be in this season of your life?

Do you need him to be gentle and caring? Like the best of mums, God is there for us when life seems unfair or uncertain. What would you like to share with him? Your tears... your fears... your regrets... your mistakes... your loneliness... your sadness... whatever it is he will be there for you.

Do you need him to be strong and supportive? Like the best of mums, God is there for us when life feels too difficult or challenging. God has the life experience to steer you safely through any crisis. How can you draw on him for the courage, the strength and/or the hope to live through your present challenges or to face your future fears? Lean into him.

You are and always will be his beloved child. His fatherly love never ends. As you ponder this, offer him your love and gratitude. It is what every parent wants to receive – their child's love. For most of us, we know how to love because of the loving example of our own parents and God's love and care. Give thanks for the love you received in your early years.

Our penultimate verse speaks of a very special mum's love – Mary's love, which is a love tinged with joy and sorrow. Even as she held the baby Jesus in her arms, she knew that her heart would be broken by the world's treatment of him.



How well we know the story
that tells of Jesus' birth,
the Lord of heaven's glory
become a child of earth;
a helpless infant sleeping,
yet King of realms above,
to find in Mary's keeping
the warmth of human love.

Timothy Dudley-Smith

CCLI reported

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

A Mother's Love

The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: 'This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Luke 2:33-35, 39-40

A Mother's love...

Jesus is forty days old in our Mothering Sunday reading. It is Candlemas, Joseph and Mary have come to the temple to give thanks to God for the gift of their first-born son. His life is to be dedicated to God's service. Here, Simeon offers the prophetic words as to who Jesus is – the Messiah – and what he will do in God's name – save the world at the cost of his own life.

Just as she did with the visit of the shepherds, I am sure that Mary will have pondered Simeon's words and treasured them in her heart. As she watched over her son as he took his first steps... as she listened to him learning his letters... as she witnessed him pick up a saw for the first time under Joseph's careful guidance... she will have thought about what God has in store for their precious son. She could not change his future. These plans had been written down long before his birth. What she could do is shape him by her mother's love so that his love would echo hers as well as his heavenly Father's.

Think about all that Mary will have done for her son. Think of the ways in which she will have instilled her values and helped him to grow in wisdom and strength so that he would have both a gentle and a strong side as the Messiah. The Jesus we see in the Gospels is shaped as much by Mary as by his Father in heaven. He is fully human and fully divine.

Give thanks for this. Ponder too the joy and the pain of her calling. Knowing that his life would be a relatively short one, each day with him will have been so very precious to Mary. She will have treasured every single moment – every memory – of his childhood and young adult years. Her life and her love were transformed by his.

Give thanks for this. Celebrate the way that the love of your parent(s), your family's love, has shaped your love and your loving path through life, and you theirs. Celebrate the way that God's love – Father and Son – has shaped who you are.



Our Father God in heaven,
to you we lift our prayer,
that every child be given
such tenderness and care,
where life is all for others,
where love your love displays:
for God's good gift of mothers
let earth unite in praise!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (CCLI reported)

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use these prayers and to add your own.

Heavenly Father, you love me as only a perfect parent can, with gentleness and with strength. I feel safe in your care.

Lord, I thank you. I love you. I will love you always.

Father, hear my prayer.

Father, love is your greatest gift to me. You have filled my life with the love of family and friends. Thank you for their love and care.

Love inspires love. Help me, Lord, this week, to act with love.

Father, hear my prayer.

Father, on this day of love, I think of those whose lives are filled with the pain of loss – loss of a mum, loss of a child, loss of the possibility of being a mum. I think of the mums afraid for their children. In love...

Father, 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.**