

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 15 February 2026
Sunday before Lent**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. It is the Sunday before Lent begins. We find ourselves on a mountain with three of the disciples, Peter, James and John, as Jesus spends time in prayerful preparation. It is a scene set for the Transfiguration. A glorious scene.

Enjoy pondering its meaning.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to contemplate this week's Gospel reading,
take a moment to open yourself to God's glorious presence.*



Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)

Prayers and Reflections for the Sunday before Lent Preparation

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 second verse.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)



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.



In the bible, mountains – high places – have a special meaning. It's where God calls his chosen ones to come and spend time with him. A mountain top is a place of meeting – of new beginning – of re-assurance.

Climbing up a mountain, you feel like you are getting closer to heaven. You're literally going up into the clouds. If you choose an isolated one, a mountain can be a place of retreat away from the busyness of life so that you can commune with the one who is always ready to listen.

Where is your place of retreat where you can be still in God's presence, draw on him for what you need for the coming day or week? Give thanks to God for this thin place where earth connects with heaven.

A mountain top is not just a thin place. It is a powerful sign of who God is, one who oversees all that is happening across the globe. All the simple, spontaneous acts of kindness. All the cruel words and actions of the world's powerful leaders which wound the vulnerable. God's justice is two-fold: of praise, well done! and of sadness, can't you see what you've done? Aren't you sorry?

What have you done today or in the past week that is worthy of God's praise? Picture the smile of joy on his face. Your love fills him with happiness, just as his love fills you with happiness and hope.

Lent is a time for new life and new growth. It is a time to flourish, with God's help.



*To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.*

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across the benefice and the globe.

Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God of life and love.

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
set straight our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness
and your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God sees. This is who God is. He is the one who oversees the billions upon billions of stars and the billions upon billions of earthly creatures.

He is the Creator of all that is. Yet he also knows each one of us.

Intimately, individually, he understands how we are feeling as we prepare for Lent's forty days to begin. He senses what or who is on our hearts.

You can open yourself to him.



St. Paul offers us the image of God as a potter who shapes our lives. He takes our raw selves – the clay – and moulds and refines us. We all have a purpose. We all have worth in his eyes.

Think about how he has shaped your life. How he has brought out the very best in you. Give thanks for this.

Ponder too how he can smooth out your rough edges, re-centre your life. Lent is a time when he can come and refine, reshape or remove those parts of yourself which aren't flourishing. Contemplate how he might do this. His Spirit can work with yours to perfect what feels out of balance – misshapen.

Pray for the trust and the courage to allow him to do this.



Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

The Transfiguration

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'

When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. 'Get up,' he said. 'Don't be afraid.' When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, 'Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.'

Matthew 17:1-9

Preparing...

I do love the passages which begin, like this one, 'After six days...'. It is an invitation to look back and see why Jesus felt drawn to this mountain top. Why does he need to get away from the crowds – from his followers – and be close to his Father in heaven?

The answer is that he has tested his team and found that Peter has been chosen as the voice of his team. Peter alone is able to say – out loud – ‘Jesus, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Yet even he is overwhelmed by the idea that his Messiah is going to suffer and die. Jesus speaks of the cross, his own and the cost of following him. It is a tough message to take in. ‘How can this be?’ is what Peter is thinking as Jesus turns his thoughts towards Jerusalem and his final showdown.

Jesus went up the mountain to commune with his Father in heaven. Take a close look at the passage. Notice how his Father is there for him. Shining face... glowing clothes... Jesus is revealed in all his glory – his Father’s glory. Jesus feels his Sonship even before his Father speaks, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’ Jesus is bathed in his Father’s love. It is a feeling that will have stayed with him, hopefully, even in the isolation and the desolation of the cross.

God also sends the two Old Testament messengers – Moses and Elijah, who are heralds of the Messiah. They come with his Father’s messages – wise words of instruction and reassurance. ‘You can do this.’ is the theme of this passage.

The three core disciples were strengthened by this glorious revelation. Jesus was too. He comes down from this thin place – this high mountain – ready to walk the way that leads to the cross. He is prepared for what is to come. Do you feel ready to walk your own path to the cross with Jesus at your side? Ponder this phrase – You can do this.



O let me see thy footmarks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone:
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my friend.

John Ernest Bode (1816-1874)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, I picture you alone with your closest friends,
absorbed in prayer with your Father in heaven. A perfect at-one-ness,
which I would love to experience daily. Lord, inspire my praying.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you faced the biggest challenge in life - rejection and death
for our sakes. You turned to your Father for help. Lord, be with those
who are facing overwhelming difficulties and dangers. Strengthen...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you knew that your disciples would be broken,
crushed by your death. You needed to give them some hope,
a glimpse of what lies beyond the cross. Lord, offer signs of hope to...

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.**