

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 29 June 2025
St. Peter & St. Paul**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Today, we are celebrating the life and ministry of Sywell's two saints: Peter and Paul. Our theme is 'Build on' as we think about their life of service as witnesses to Jesus - their Messiah. Paul built on Peter's work, we build on those who have gone before us.

Enjoy reflecting on your calling!

Every blessing,

Revd Katrina

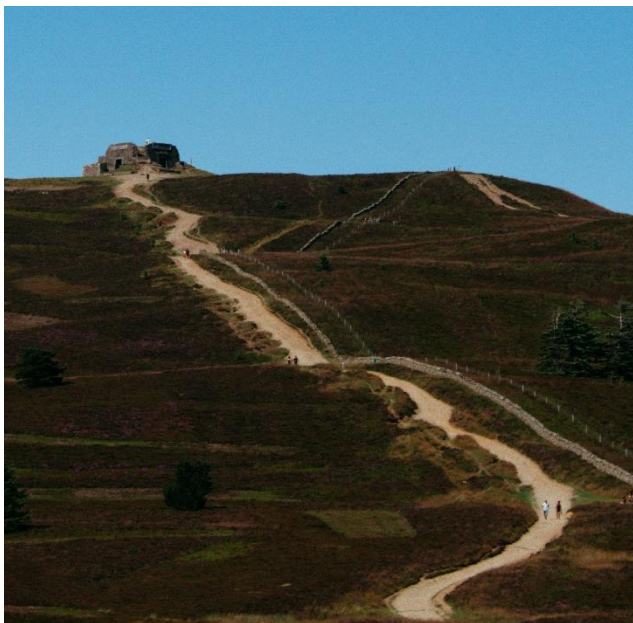
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As we prepare to think about Peter and Paul laying down the foundations for our Lord's worldwide Church, like them - place your trust in Jesus, God's Son.

Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy strength,
and Christ thy right;
lay hold on life, and it shall be
thy joy and crown eternally.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875)

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home for St. Peter and St. Paul
Build on

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 this next verse from our hymn.

Run the straight race with God's good grace,
lift up thine eyes and seek his face;
life with its way before us lies;
Christ is the path,
and Christ the prize.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875)



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

Feel our Lord's forgiveness.

Our verse reminds me of the times when I have walked up steep hills or winding cliff paths. When the going is tough and I get a little breathless, I tend to look down and concentrate on each step I am about to take. I forget to look up. All of my effort is going on getting to the top - the prize. I have to remind myself to pause... take in the view... before moving on. And, this is what our verse is inviting us to do.

On the day of celebration for the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, God is asking us to take a spiritual breather and look at where we are in life, where our Lord is in our daily lives, and think about the path we are on. Where is it heading? What aspects are lifting our spirits and/or blessing those around us? What do we need to stay close to Jesus? Draw others onto the path that leads to life - eternal life?

Do take as long as you wish on this spiritual exercise.

I look to the horizon -
What will tomorrow bring?
Today, where am I standing?
Who will come to my aid?
Who needs my help?

My eyes are drawn beyond the limits of my capabilities,
the weakness of mind and body.

There I find you -
your peace.
Your easy breath.
I place my trust in you -
anew.

And take my next step.

*based on Psalm 121 Redux
by Carla A. Grosch-Miller (2014)*

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

*Across our villages and the worldwide Church,
this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle
of prayer to the God who calls us.*

Almighty God,
whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul
glorified you in their death as in their life:
grant that your Church,
inspired by their teaching and example,
and made one by your Spirit,
may ever stand firm upon the one foundation,
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.

*Our Collect for St. Peter and St. Paul reminds us that, even in their dying
and death, these two apostles were laying down foundations for Christ's
worldwide Church. For them, Christ was both their path and their prize.
Dying at the hands of others, they looked far beyond their earthly trials to
the life that lies behind this life - eternal life. It gave them the courage to
do what feels impossible. Die for Jesus.*

*Thankfully, we are not called to die for Jesus. We are called to live each
and every day of our lives out of love for Jesus - even in our earthly life's
closing stages. For our life's path will lead us to where Jesus is. Both of
our saints can inspire us to keep going when the way through life is tough,
filled with sadness. Acts tells us the story of their church building days,
which were full of insights and adventures. Their letters can give us
wisdom for life.*

*Take a moment to recall some of the words of Peter and/or Paul or events
from their lives that you draw on for spiritual or daily inspiration.
Give thanks for these.*

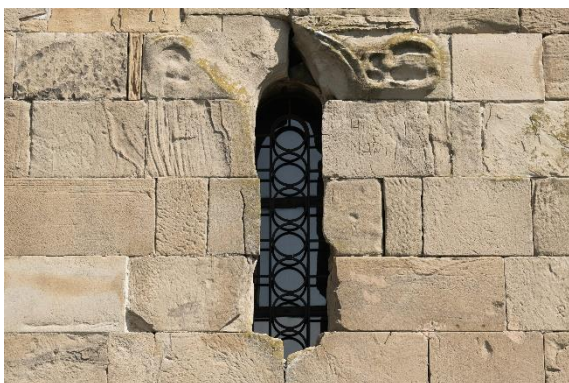
Here is one of my favourites. It fits so very well with today's theme of building on the work of our two saints.

As you come to him, the living Stone -
rejected by humans but chosen by God
and precious to him -
you also, like living stones,
are being built into a spiritual house
to be a holy priesthood,
offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ.

You are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God's special possession,
that you may declare the praises of him
who called you out of darkness
into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:4-5, 9

Notice how we are each called to be living stones within Christ's Church. Young or old, weak or strong, we each have a role to play within Christ's ever growing and evolving Church. Our roles are unique to us - to who we are in Christ and our spiritual gifts and life experiences. Others come to faith - children and adults - through us. They find their place in Christ's Church and their own unique roles with our help. Just as we came to faith through those who taught or inspired us.



Picture the people who led you to faith, built up your spiritual life.

Picture the people who come to church because of your faith. Think of the love and kindness that you display daily because of your faith.

These are the living stones on which Christ is building his Church. You are precious to him.

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Paul writes to his protégé Timothy

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

Build on my work...

This passage feels like it was written by St. Paul as his life draws to a close - a dangerous close. He is encouraging his young student Timothy to keep going when the time comes for him to face his own challenges and perils. 'Stay faithful! God is at your side.' Timothy did build on St. Paul's work. Like his mentor, Timothy would go on to die for his faith but not before others had come to faith through his life of service and witness as a bishop in the early Church. Timothy - a living stone put in place by Paul - drew in other living stones. Just as you and I are doing.

Ponder what you will do this week to encourage or build up someone, or help them to stay strong in the face of life's challenges.



Faint not nor fear, his arms are near;
he changeth not, and thou art dear;
only believe, and thou shalt see
that Christ is all in all to thee.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you are our chief cornerstone. Your church is built on your teaching and loving example, and the lives of the first living stones, Peter and Paul. Lord, you called me and I am yours, build on me, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you gave Peter and Paul the strength of faith, and the courage, to keep on believing even in life's darkness, to trust in your promise of eternal life. Lord, keep strong, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, your churches are visible for all to see - as buildings, as church families who serve their communities, as living stones who make a difference in their daily lives. Lord, encourage, I pray...

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.**