



*Praying a Blessing
in Lent
~ 2021 ~*

Opening Prayer

Either:

O Lord, open our lips;
and our mouths shall proclaim your praise

Let us worship the Lord.
All praise to his name.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

or:

Blessed are you, God of compassion and mercy,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
In the darkness of our sin,
your light breaks forth like the dawn
and your healing springs up for deliverance.
As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help,
sustain us with your bountiful Spirit
and open our lips to sing your praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

* - *Some notes*

Ember Days: Four groups of three days spread throughout the year, which since at least the 2nd century AD have been set aside for fasting and prayer. Since at least the 5th century they have been especially associated with prayer for those whom God is calling to serve him in ministry.

This booklet was produced by The Benefice of Longnor, Quarnford, Sheen, and Warslow with Elkstones for use within that Benefice and for use by friends in other churches, and by any who might find it helpful.

We pray that it will be a source of blessing to you.



THE LONGNOR BENEFICE

Longnor, Quarnford, and Sheen, with Warslow & Elkstones
(including Newtown, Reapsmoor, and Hollinsclough)

17th February 2021: Ash Wednesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 51.1-18

Reading: Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

Thought for the Day:

“For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Extract from Genesis 3:19, KJV

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: thankfulness for all God's gifts.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole

Amen.

18th February 2021: Thursday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 1

Reading: Luke 9: 22-25

Thought for the Day:

The person who shows love and compassion to those in any kind of affliction is blessed, not only with the virtue of good will but also with the gift of peace

St Leo the Great (d. 461)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: for all our Church Wardens and Treasurers.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

May God give to each of us a heart of compassion and vision to see those who are in need of it.

Amen.

19th February 2021: Friday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 51.1-5, 17-18

Reading: Matthew 9:14-15

Thought for the Day:

The highest good is prayer and conversation with God, because it means that we are in God's company and in union with him. When light enters our bodily eyes our eyesight is sharpened; when a soul is intent on God, God's inextinguishable light shines into it and makes it bright and clear. I am talking, of course, of prayer that comes from the heart and not from routine: not the prayer that is assigned to particular days or particular moments in time, but the prayer that happens continuously by day and by night.

From a homily attributed to St John Chrysostom (d. 407)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: for our Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, we recognise Lent is a time of waiting. We remember the long wait last year and ask that you be with us as we wait, as we look towards the hope of the future.

Amen.

20th February 2021: Saturday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 86:1-7

Reading: Luke 5:27-32

Thought for the Day:

The soul should be quick to turn to God not only at times of formal prayers. Whatever we are engaged in, whether it is care for the poor, or some other duty, or some act of generosity, we should remember God and long for God. The love of God will be as salt is to food, making our actions into a perfect dish to set before the Lord of all things. Then it is right that we should receive the fruits of our labours, overflowing onto us through all eternity, if we have been offering them to Him throughout our lives.

From a homily attributed to St John Chrysostom (d. 407)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: for all we do to reach out to others.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Father God, give us courage to take up our calling to proclaim your good news of forgiveness and new life, in both our words and actions.

Amen.

21st February 2021: The First Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 25:1-9

Reading: Mark 1:9-15

Thought for the Day:

Prayer stands before God as an honoured ambassador. It gives joy to the spirit and peace to the heart. I warn you, though: do not imagine that prayer is mere words. Prayer is the desire for God, an indescribable devotion, not given by man but brought about by God's grace. As Saint Paul says: For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit Himself intercedes on our behalf in a way that could never be put into words.

From a homily attributed to St John Chrysostom (d. 407)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of the Messiah (page 51)

Prayer topic: for our life in the Deanery and our Synod Reps.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us to live each day as people who see hope where others see hopelessness, and who rejoice where others despair, because your breath gives us life and your Word dwells among us.

Amen.

22nd February 2021: Monday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 19:7-end

Reading: Matthew 25.31-end

Thought for the Day:

Let your door stand open to receive Christ, unlock your soul to him, offer him a welcome in your mind, and then you will see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, and the joy of grace. Throw wide the gate of your heart, stand before the sun of the everlasting light that shines on everyone. This true light shines on all, but if any close their windows they will deprive themselves of eternal light. If you shut the doors of your mind, you shut out Christ. Though he can enter, he does not want to force his way in rudely, or compel us to admit him against our will.

St Ambrose (d. 397)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: for the bereaved and those who mourn.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

May your mercy always be with us, Lord, for we have hoped in you. In you, Lord, we put our trust.

Amen.

23rd February 2021: Tuesday

Polycarp of Smyrna, c.155

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 34:4-6

Reading: Matthew 6:7-15

Thought for the Day:

I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the Word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance; and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ, the words he had heard from their mouths.

Papias (d. mid-2nd Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of The Messiah (page 51)

Prayer topic: for those who are lonely.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Your light is true light, Lord, and your truth shines like the day. Direct us to salvation through your life-giving words.

Amen.

24th February 2021: Wednesday

*Ember day**

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 51.1–5, 17–18

Reading: Luke 11.29-32

Thought for the Day:

We see that it is not the task of Christianity to provide easy answers to every question, but to make us progressively aware of a mystery. God is not so much the object of our knowledge as the cause of our wonder.

Kallistos Ware

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of God's Light (page 49)

Prayer topic: for those who are being called to serve God.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God of peace, whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom and restored the broken to wholeness of life: look with compassion on the anguish of the world, and by your healing power make whole both people and nations; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

25th February 2021: Thursday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: Psalm 138

Reading: Matthew 7:7-12

Thought for the Day:

When men search for God with their bodily eyes they find Him nowhere, for He is invisible. But for those who ponder in the Spirit He is present everywhere. He is in all, yet beyond all.

St Symeon the New Theologian (d. 1022)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: for the PCC Members of all our churches.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

In your bounty, Lord, give us the Spirit
who alone can teach us to think and do what is right,
so that we, who without you cannot exist,
may live in loving obedience to your will.

Amen.

26th February 2021: Friday

*Ember day**

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 130

Reading: Matthew 5:20-26

Thought for the Day:

The perfection of brotherly love lies in the love of one's enemies. We can find no greater inspiration for this than grateful remembrance of the wonderful patience of Christ.

St Aelred (d. 1167)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: all those who have been baptised, or wish to be, especially for people and families that have had baptisms postponed during Covid-19 restrictions.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, bless all the work of our hearts and hands and voices, that your name will be glorified in us.

Amen.

27th February 2021: Saturday

George Herbert (d. 1633)
*Ember Day**

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 119:1-8

Reading: Matthew 5:43-end

Thought for the Day:

He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.

George Herbert (d. 1633)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of the Messiah (page 51)

Prayer topic: for the unity of our congregations.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Help us, Holy God, to live in unity, just as you do: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

28th February 2021: The Second Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 22:23-31

Reading: Mark 8:31-38

Thought for the Day:

A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter:
he that has found one has found a treasure.
There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend,
and no scales can measure his excellence.
A faithful friend is an elixir of life;
and those who fear the Lord will find him.
Whoever fears the Lord directs his friendship aright,
for as he is, so is his neighbour also.

Sirach 6:14-17

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: All those who work in the shops, pubs, and businesses within our villages.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, help us to undertake all our work as though you are the one paying our wages. Keep us honest and fair in all our dealings, knowing that all our work is done for you.

Amen.

1st March 2021: Monday

*St David, Bishop of Menevia,
Patron of Wales, (d.601)*

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 79: 8-9, 12, 14

Reading: Luke 6.36–38

Thought for the Day:

In the garden of our Savior, no flower grows unseen;
His kindness rains like water on every humble seed.
No simple act of mercy escapes His watchful eye —
for there is One who loves me: His hand is over mine.

Oh, the deeds forgotten; oh, the works unseen,
every drink of water flowing graciously,
every tender mercy, You're making glorious.
This You have asked us: do little things with great love,
little things with great love.

In the kingdom of the heavens, no suffering is unknown;
each tear that falls is holy, each breaking heart a throne.
There is a song of beauty on ev'ry weeping eye —
for there is One who loves me: His heart, it breaks with mine.

At the table of our Savior, no mouth will go unfed;
His children in the shadows stream in and raise their heads.
Oh give us ears to hear them and give us eyes that see —
for there is One who loves them: I am His hands and feet.

*From the song 'Little Things with Great Love by Audrey Assad, Madisson Cunningham & Isaac Wardell
(Partly based on words attributed to St David)*

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: For all those who involved in caring professions, or acting as carers for others.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you for all those who show care and love for others. Help us to do the same.

Amen.

2nd March 2021: Tuesday

*St Chad, Bishop of Lichfield,
Missionary, (d.672)*

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 50:8, 16-end

Reading: Matthew 23.1–12

Thought for the Day:

“I willingly resign this charge, having never thought myself worthy of it, but which, however unworthy, I submitted to undertake in obedience.”

*St Chad, on being asked to step down as bishop.
He was recognised for his humility and reinstated.*

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all those work in one of the three schools in the Benefice.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, we thank you for all earthly parents and teachers, and ask for your blessing on all those who have cared for children during the pandemic restrictions

Amen.

3rd March 2021: Wednesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 31.4–5, 14–18

Reading: Matthew 20.17–28

Thought for the Day:

Lord, let me seek you in desiring you:
And desire you in seeking you.
Let me find you by loving you
And love you in finding you

St Anselm (d. 1109)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all the children who attend one of the three schools in the Benefice.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, protect your family. Strengthen us with your consoling presence and lead us to the joys of Heaven.

Amen.

4th March 2021: Thursday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 1

Reading: Luke 16.19–end

Thought for the Day:

I know that the Immovable comes down; I know that the Invisible appears to me; I know that he who is far outside the whole creation Takes me within himself and hides me in his arms, and then I find myself outside the whole world. I, a frail, small mortal in the world, Behold the Creator of the world, all of him, within myself; and I know that I shall not die, for I am within the Life, I have the whole of Life springing up as a fountain within me. He is in my heart, he is in heaven: Both there and here he shows himself to me with equal glory.

St Symeon the New Theologian (d. 1022)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: For all those who serve on Parish or County Councils.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, you love innocence of heart, and when it is lost you alone can restore it.

Turn then our hearts to you, and kindle in them the fire of your Spirit, so that we may be steadfast in faith and unwearied in good works.

Amen.

5th March 2021: Friday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 105.16–22

Reading: Matthew 21.33–43, 45–46

Thought for the Day:

The bodies of our fellow human beings must be treated with more care than our own. Christian love teaches us to give our brethren not only spiritual gifts, but material gifts as well.

Mother Maria of Paris (d. 1945)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: For all those who live in Longnor.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, as we look towards Easter show us your face in the faces of our friends, and family; in our neighbours and in the faces of strangers. **Amen.**

6th March 2021: Saturday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 103.1–4, 9–12

Reading: Luke 15.1–3, 11–end

Thought for the Day:

God does not insist or desire that we should mourn in agony of heart; rather, it is his wish that out of love for him we should rejoice with laughter in our soul. Take away sin, and tears become superfluous; where there is no bruise, no ointment is required. Before the fall Adam shed no tears, and in the same way there will be no more tears after the resurrection from the dead, when sin has been destroyed. For pain, sorrow and lamentation will then have fled away.

St John Climacus (d. 649)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 49)

Prayer topic: For all those who live in Quarnford.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, as we look towards Easter, prepare our hearts and lives to recognise Jesus. We thank you for your humility and that you came to live among us.

Amen.

7th March 2021: The Third Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 19

Reading: John 2.13–22

Thought for the Day:

An old man used to say: “Spread abroad the name of Jesus in humility and with a meek heart; show him your feebleness, and he will become your strength”.

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers (circa 4th Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all those who live in Sheen.

The Lord’s Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Father God, help us to glow with your inner light, so that we illuminate all around us with the light of your love and power.

Amen.

8th March 2021: Monday

Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln (d.1910)

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 42.1–2, 43.1–4

Reading: Luke 4.24–30

Thought for the Day:

It is not necessary to be always thinking directly of God. Indeed, it is not possible. Sometimes, of course, we ought to, and can do this, but at other times we must give our minds to what we are doing, even if it is playing and amusement. We may, of course, commit the chief periods of our time and of our occupation to God by a short prayer, as we do before and after meals, and before reading the Bible. So also before any study, and after any study, and such a word of prayer to bless our games that they may be innocent and refreshing to us, and those with whom we play. In this way we can carry out the words "I have set God always before me," and adopt the motto, "*Laborare est orare* (to work is to pray)". A brief prayer is also possible during work and play, but in the main you should be satisfied with commending your work or play to God, and then yourself into it heartily.

Edward King (d. 1910)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: For all those who live in Warslow or Elkstones.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Father God, give us grace and courage to look for you in the here and now, in all we do.

Amen.

9th March 2020: Tuesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 25.3–10

Reading: Matthew 18.21–end

Thought for the Day:

Let this be the pattern for all men when they practice mercy: show mercy to others in the same way, with the same generosity, with the same promptness, as you want others to show mercy to you

St Peter Chrysologus (d. 450)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Song of Christ's Glory (page 52)

Prayer topic: For those who are lonely.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, come to us in your power and remind us of the truth and beauty of your Gospel Message.

Amen.

10th March 2021: Wednesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 147.13–end

Reading: Matthew 5.17–19

Thought for the Day:

When the Spirit of God descends upon a man and overshadows him with the fulness of his outpouring, then his soul overflows with a joy not to be described, for the Holy Spirit turns to joy whatever he touches. The kingdom of heaven is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Acquire inward peace, and thousands around you will find their salvation.

St Seraphim of Sarov (d. 1833)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all those who are finding Covid-19 restrictions difficult.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God of Power and Might, Creator and King of all, in your humility you came and dwelt amongst us: grant us a share of your humility and a place in your eternal kingdom.

Amen.

11th March 2021: Thursday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 95.1–2, 6–end

Reading: Luke 11.14–23

Thought for the Day:

All the angels pray. Every creature prays. Cattle and wild beasts pray and bend the knee. As they come from their barns and caves they look out to heaven and call out, lifting up their spirit in their own fashion. The birds too rise and lift themselves up to heaven: they open out their wings, instead of hands, in the form of a cross, and give voice to what seems to be a prayer.

What more need be said on the duty of prayer? Even the Lord himself prayed.

Tertullian (d. 240)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all our First Responders.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, you send us your Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth: help us to understand the truth we see, and to live like people who believe it.

Amen.

12th March 2021: Friday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 81.6–10, 13, 16

Reading: Mark 12.28–34

Thought for the Day:

Jesus condemned no-one except hypocrites

Kallistos Ware

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all those who live on outlying farms.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Father God, may we too want to seek you out instead of sitting, satisfied with the little we already have.

Amen.

13th March 2021: Saturday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 51.1–2, 17–end

Reading: Luke 18.9–14

Thought for the Day:

Not even night should interrupt you in your duty of mercy. Do not say: Come back and I will give you something tomorrow. There should be no delay between your intention and your good deed. Generosity is the one thing that cannot admit of delay.

Share your bread with the hungry, and bring the needy and the homeless into your house, with a joyful and eager heart. He who does acts of mercy should do so with cheerfulness. The grace of a good deed is doubled when it is done with promptness and speed. What is given with a bad grace or against one's will is distasteful and far from praiseworthy.

St Gregory Nazianzen (d. 390)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of God's Light (page 49)

Prayer topic: For those for whom no one else will pray.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand temptations and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God.

Amen.

14th March 2021: The Fourth Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 107.1–3,17–22

Reading: John 3.14–21

Reading and Thought for the Day:

Because Christ is the perfect Love, his life on earth can never become a life of the past. He remains present to all eternity. Then he was alone, and bore the sins of men as one whole, alone. But, in death, he took us all into his work. Therefore the Gospel is now present with us. We may enter inside his own sacrifice.

Mother Maria of Normanby (d. 1977)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all those who cannot attend church services but would like to.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives
and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid
and turn us back to you

Amen.

15th March 2021: Monday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 30.1–5, 8, 11–end

Reading: John 4.43–end

Thought for the Day:

It is one of the most extraordinary, unbelievable affirmations that we make about our human life, that this little life of ours, beginning in time, in the lives of our parents, has its conclusion and issue beyond time in the Kingdom that lasts forever.

A.M. Allchin (d. 2010)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: thankfulness for family and friends.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives
and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid
and turn us back to you again.

Amen.

16th March 2021: Tuesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 46.1–8

Reading: John 5.1–3, 5–16

Thought for the Day:

In Jesus Christ, God allows himself to be seen, and in seeing God we come alive. Life is a gift, and the means of life is to be found in God alone; so as we come to share the life of God, we are also coming to know God and enjoy his favour.

St Irenaeus (d. 202)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For those who have had their work disrupted by Covid-19.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord, prepare our hearts to welcome the mystery of Easter and to proclaim the good news of salvation.

Amen.

17th March 2021: Wednesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 145.8–18

Reading: John 5.17–30

Thought for the Day:

I arise today Through God's strength to pilot me: God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear
me, God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie
before me, God's shield to protect me, God's host to save me

Attributed to St Patrick (5th Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all those who live in Newtown and Reapsmoor

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, keep alive in us the fire of the faith
and strengthen us in our pilgrimage towards the light of everlasting life.
Amen.

18th March 2021: Thursday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 106.19–23

Reading: John 5.31–47

Thought for the Day:

The body that lay lifeless in the tomb is ours. The body that rose again on the third day is ours. The body that ascended above all the heights of heaven to the right hand of the Father's glory is ours. If then we walk in the way of his commandments, and are not ashamed to acknowledge the price he paid for our salvation in a lowly body, we too are to rise to share his glory. The promise he made will be fulfilled in the sight of all: Whoever acknowledges me before men, I too will acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven.

St Leo the Great (d. 461)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all who work in the emergency services .

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord, Since you are the one who knows the secrets of our hearts, fill them
with the light of truth.

Amen.

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 89.26–36

Reading: Matthew 1.18–25

Thought for the Day:

How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all”. Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

Pope Francis in Patris Corde

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all foster-parents, adoptive parents, step-parents and guardians, and the children entrusted to their care.

The Lord’s Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Take our shame away from us, Lord, and make us rejoice in your saving works. May all who have been chosen by your Son always abound in works of faith, hope and love in your service.

Amen.

20th March 2021: Saturday

Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, 687

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 7.1–2, 8–10

Reading: John 7.40–52

Thought for the Day:

It was said of an old man that when his thoughts said to him, 'Relax today, and tomorrow repent', he retorted, 'No, I am going to repent today, and may the will of God be done tomorrow

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers (4th Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of God's Light (page 50)

Prayer topic: For those who live alone.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

In your gentle mercy, Lord,
guide our wayward hearts,
for we know that left to ourselves
we cannot do your will.

Amen.

21st March 2021: The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 119.9–16

Reading: John 12.20–33

Reading and Thought for the Day:

Just as a judge, when sentencing a criminal functions better when guided by reason, conducting the proceedings with tranquility, rather than allowing himself to have an emotional or violent response to the case; so too we will correct ourselves better by a quiet persevering repentance than by an irritated, hasty and passionate one.

St Francis de Sales (d. 1622)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all those coping with unexpected changes to living circumstances.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all

Amen.

22nd March 2021: Monday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 23

Reading: John 8.1–11

Thought for the Day:

You can hide nothing from God. The mask you wear before others will do you no good before him. He wants to see you as you are, he wants to be gracious to you. You do not have to go on lying to yourself and your brothers and sisters, as if you were without sin; you can dare to be a sinner. Thank God for that: he loves the sinner but hates sin.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (d. 1945)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: Situations we know of where repentance and forgiveness may be needed.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord our God, your Son so loved the world
that he gave himself up to death for our sake.
Strengthen us by your grace,
and give us a heart willing to live by that same love.

Amen.

23rd March 2021: Tuesday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 102.1–3, 16–23

Reading: John 8.21–30

Thought for the Day:

The most important thing that happens between God and the human soul is to love and to be loved.

Kallistos Kataphygiotis (14th Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For those who have had been bereaved.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

24th March 2021: Wednesday

Oscar Romero (d. 1980)

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 17.1–8, 16

Reading: John 8.31–42

Thought for the Day:

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

Oscar Romero (d. 1980)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all those have been persecuted for following their conscience.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, your Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence. Give us new hearts and constant wills that we may learn of your love and come to love you in spirit and in truth.

Amen.

25th March 2021: Thursday

The Annunciation

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 40.5–11

Reading: Luke 1.26–38

Thought for the Day:

She it is who, by her vocation to be the place of God, and by her fulfilment of that vocation, reveals the true destiny of all places, indeed of all humankind and all creation, which shares in that high calling to become the place of God's inhabitation.

A.M. Allchin (d. 2010)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all who are expecting, or hoping for, a baby.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

26th March 2021: Friday

*Harriet Monsell, Founder of the
Community of St John the Baptist, (d. 1883)*

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 18.1–6

Reading: John 10.31–end

Thought for the Day:

The Church was intended to represent Christ in his fulness. It cannot do so in any single individual, it can only do so in the different lives of different members of His Body. Each one is the complement of another. All together make up such completeness as is possible to be realized on earth.

T.T. Carter in 'Harriet Monsell' [biography]

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all in community accommodation, such as care homes or religious communities.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all

Amen.

27th March 2021: Saturday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 121

Reading: John 11.45–end

Thought for the Day:

God, seeing the world falling into ruin through fear, never stops working to bring it back into being through love, inviting it back by grace, holding it firm by charity, and embracing it with affection.

St Peter Crysologus (d. 450)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of God's Light (page 49)

Prayer topic: For all who work on farms or with livestock.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins and assure us of his eternal love.

Amen.

28th March 2021: Palm Sunday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalms: 118.1–2, 19–24 & 31.9–16

Readings: John 12.12–16, Mark 14.1 – end of 15

Reading and Thought for the Day:

In his humility Christ entered the dark regions of our fallen world and he is glad that he became so humble for our sake, glad that he came and lived among us and shared in our nature in order to raise us up again to himself. And even though we are told that he has now ascended above the highest heavens – the proof, surely, of his power and godhead – his love for man will never rest until he has raised our earthbound nature from glory to glory, and made it one with his own in heaven.

St Andrew of Crete (d. 8th Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all those for whom it is uncertain whether hope may be realised.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

True and humble king, hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.

Amen.

29th March 2021: Monday of Holy Week

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 36.5–11

Reading: John 12.1–11

Thought for the Day:

Love for God is ecstatic, making us go out from ourselves: it does not allow the lover to belong any more to himself, but he belongs only to the Beloved.

[pseudo] Dionysius the Areopagite (circa 5th – 6th Century)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: All those who work in theological research and teaching.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

30th March 2021: Tuesday of Holy Week

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 71.1–14*

Reading: John 12.20–36

Thought for the Day:

Personhood and love signify life, movement, discovery. So the doctrine of the Trinity means that we should think of God in terms that are dynamic rather than static. God is not just stillness, repose, unchanging perfection. For our images of the Trinitarian God we should look rather to the wind, to the running water, to the unresting flames of fire.

Kallistos Ware

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For those who find faith and prayer hard.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

You proclaimed the poor to be blessed, Lord Jesus, for the kingdom of heaven is given to them. Fill us generously with your gifts. Teach us to put our trust in the Father and to seek his kingdom first of all rather than imitate the powerful and envy the rich.

Amen.

31st March 2021: Wednesday of Holy Week

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 70

Reading: John 13.21–32

Thought for the Day:

I can open the telephone directory for Wigan and scan the names recorded on its pages; and, as I read, I am prepared to believe that some (or even most) of these people actually exist. But I know none of them personally, I have never even visited Wigan, and so my belief that they exist makes no particular difference to me. When, on the other hand, I say to a much-loved friend, “I believe in you”, I am doing far more than expressing a belief that this person exists. “I believe in you” means: I turn to you, I rely upon you, I put my full trust in you and I hope in you. And that is what we are saying to God in the Creed.

Kallistos Ware

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: Venite – a Song of Triumph (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all those who will receive bad news over the coming months.

The Lord’s Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Through your Son you taught us, Father, not to be fearful of tomorrow but to commit our lives to your care. Do not withhold your Spirit from us but help us find a life of peace after these days of trouble.

Amen.

1st April 2021: Maundy Thursday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 116.1,10–17

Reading: John 13.1–17,31b–35

Thought for the Day:

Because faith is not logical certainty but a personal relationship, and because this personal relationship is as yet very incomplete in each of us and needs continually to develop further, it is by no means impossible for faith to coexist with doubt.

Kallistos Ware

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: The Magnificat (page 48)

Prayer topic: For all who have felt betrayed by a friend or a loved one.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on our faith, and graciously grant us peace.

Amen.

2nd April 2021: Good Friday

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 22

Reading: John 18.1 – 19.42

Thought for the Day:

We should not think only of the bodily sufferings which Christ endured at his Passion—the scourging, the stumbling beneath the weight of the Cross, the nails, the thirst and heat, the torment of hanging stretched on the wood. The true meaning of the Passion is found, not in this only, but much more in his spiritual sufferings—in his sense of failure, isolation and utter loneliness, in the pain of love offered but rejected.

Kallistos Ware

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: For who, like Jesus, have been rejected by those they love.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus
we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear
may we place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

3rd April 2021: Easter Eve

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover

Psalm: 31.1–4, 15, 16*

Reading: John 19.38–end

Thought for the Day:

It is only by being a prisoner for religious convictions in a Soviet camp that one can really understand the mystery of the fall of the first man, the mystical meaning of the redemption of all creation, and the great victory of Christ over the forces of evil. It is only when we suffer for the ideals of the Holy Gospel that we can realize our sinful infirmity and our unworthiness in comparison with the great martyrs of the first Christian Church. Only then can we grasp the absolute necessity for profound meekness and humility, without which we cannot be saved; only then can we begin to discern the passing image of the seen, and the eternal life of the Unseen.

Letter from a Soviet Concentration Camp (part 1 of 2)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of God's Light (page 49)

Prayer topic: For all who have lost hope.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

In the depths of our isolation
we cry to you, Lord God:
give light in our darkness
and bring us out of the prison of our despair;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

4thth April 2021: Easter Day

Opening Prayer: Inside Front Cover
Psalms: 118.1–2, 14–24
Readings: John 20.1–18, Acts 10.34–43

Reading and Thought for the Day:

On Easter Day all of us who were imprisoned for religious convictions were united in the one joy of Christ. We were all taken into one feeling, into one spiritual triumph, glorifying the one eternal God. There was no solemn Paschal service with the ringing of church bells, no possibility in our camp to gather for worship, to dress up for the festival, to prepare Easter dishes. On the contrary, there was even more work and more interference than usual. All the prisoners here for religious convictions, whatever their denomination, were surrounded by more spying, by more threats from the secret police.

Yet Easter was there: great, holy, spiritual, unforgettable. It was blessed by the presence of our risen God among us—blessed by the silent Siberian stars and by our sorrows. How our hearts beat joyfully in communion with the great Resurrection! Death is conquered, fear no more, an eternal Easter is given to us! Full of this marvellous Easter, we send you from our prison camp the victorious and joyful tidings: Christ is risen!

Letter from a Soviet Concentration Camp (part 2 of 2)

Spend a moment in silent reflection.

Canticle: A Song of Solomon (page 50)

Prayer topic: For all those who bring others the good news of the resurrection.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

God of glory, by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Canticles

The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

A Song of God's Light

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?

Though a host encamp against me,
my heart shall not be afraid,
and though there rise up war against me,
yet will I put my trust in him.

One thing have I asked of the Lord
and that alone I seek:
that I may live in the house of the lord
all the days of my life,

To behold the fair beauty of the Lord
and to seek his will in his temple.

For in the day of trouble
he shall hide me in his shelter;
in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me
and set me high upon a rock.

Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation
with great gladness;
I will sing and make music to the Lord.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.**

Amen

A Song of Solomon

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;

For love is strong as death, passion as fierce as the grave;
it's flashes are of fire, a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it.

If all the wealth of our house were offered for love,
it would be utterly scorned.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.**

Amen

Venite – a Song of Triumph

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us heartily rejoice in the rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving
and be glad in him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God
and a great king above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth
and the heights of the mountains are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands have moulded the dry land.

Come, let us worship and bow down
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God;
we are the people of his pasture
and the sheep of his hand.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.**

Amen

A Song of the Messiah

The people who walked in darkness have seen a
great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
upon them the light has dawned.

You have increased their joy and given them great
gladness;
They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest.

For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them;
the collar that lay heavy on their shoulders.

For to us a child is born and to us a son is given,
and the government will be upon his shoulder.

And his name will be called: Wonderful Counsellor;
the Mighty God;
the everlasting Father; the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,

Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness.

From this time forth and for evermore;
the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.**

Amen

The Song of Christ's Glory

Christ Jesus was in the form of God,
but he did not cling to equality with God.

He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,
and was born in human likeness.

Being found in human form he humbled himself,
and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him,
and bestowed on him the name above every name.

That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow,
in heaven and on the earth and under the earth;

And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.**

Amen.