



**MERTON COLLEGE**

The Chapel of St Mary and St John

**PRAYERS AND RESOURCES**

March 2020

## **Merton College Chapel Prayers and Resources**

St Paul reminds us that ‘neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 8.38-39). We offer these resources to give you some ideas to maintain and deepen your faith, to remind you that God loves you, and to ensure we remain connected to one another through our prayers.

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## **Church of England and National Resources**

Here are three key websites for up-to-date guidance from the government, the NHS, and the Church.

### **Public Health England: Public Health Matters Blog:**

This blog contains links to recent Public Health England news, articles and guidance. It includes posts such as 'Coronavirus – what you need to know'; 'Coronavirus: What is social distancing?'; and 'Coronavirus – 5 things you can do to protect yourself and your community': <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/>

### **NHS 111:**

This page offers general advice about Coronavirus, links to common questions about it, and guidance for what to do if you think you have symptoms: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

### **Church of England guidance for Coronavirus:**

This is an updated resource that contains guidance for churches as well as links to online resources for a public health and resources for prayer and liturgy:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

## Resources for Prayer at Home

*Common Worship* reminds us that 'Believers who cannot physically receive the sacrament are to be assured that they are partakers by faith of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits he conveys to us by them.' Illness, self-isolation, and quarantine cannot separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ (Romans 8.38-39).

A prayer for those unable to take the Eucharist:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you;

never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

*St Alphonsus de Liguori*

The resources in this section include links to Daily Prayer and Worship, some suggestions for how to pray at home, and prayers that you could use throughout the day and which address specific situations (such as illness, fear, and sleep).

### Daily Prayer and Worship

#### Daily Prayer:

The Daily Offices – Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Night Prayer (also known as Compline) – can be found on this page which also has a link for Prayer During the Day. This page is updated every day and by clicking on any of the services, you will have access to all of the readings and prayers for that day. If you are saying the prayer on your own, you simply say all of the parts, including those in **bold**. If you click the link to 'More Options' in the middle of the page, you can indicate your preference for services from *Common Worship* or the *Book of Common Prayer*:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

You can also download these as an app if you'd like to have access to the Daily Offices each day on your phone or another device (it's free!). The link to do so is at the bottom of this page: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

If you just want one prayer for the day, the Church of England offers a 'Prayer for the Day' that is both written and spoken, if hearing a prayer prayed aloud would be helpful for you: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-daily-prayer/todays-prayer>

And, if you want daily prayer that you can print and use every day, the Church has created a 12-page booklet for Daily Prayer and Reflection. It can be printed or used online and will work for everyday of the week: <https://bit.ly/2UrbzTI>

Another fantastic option online is the site called 'Pray As You Go'. It includes a short (11-12 minutes) daily act of prayer and is easy to use. The site (it also has an app by the same name), uses music and pictures to help you pray and reflect with a passage of Scripture. It follows the Roman Catholic calendar, but is widely used by Christians of all traditions. There are also special seasonal meditations. <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>.

An Ordinary Office is an initiative within the Church of England for those who have difficulty reading. You can find links on this site to Morning, Midday and Evening Prayer either read aloud, as a video, or in symbols. It also includes links to prayers for those having trouble sleeping: <http://anordinaryoffice.org.uk/>.

### **Online Worship:**

The BBC has a Daily Service, which is about 15 minutes with a reflection, reading from Scripture, prayers, and hymns. It's every day at 9.45am on the BBC website and on Radio 4 Longwave and you can also listen to services from the last 30 days: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006wzfs>

The BBC also has a Prayer for the Day, which is about 3-4 minutes and includes reflection and prayer. It's on at 5.43am on BBC Radio 4 and you can also listen to prayers from the last 30 days on the BBC website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qmpj/episodes/guide>

And then there is Sunday Worship, which is about 40 minutes and includes a full service from a church in the UK. It's on Sunday mornings at 8.10am on BBC Radio 4. You can also listen to it on the BBC website, as well as services from the previous 3 weeks: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnds>

BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong is broadcast every Wednesday at 3:30pm during the Afternoon Concerts block on BBC Radio 3, with a repeat on Sunday afternoons at 3.00pm. The most recent broadcast is available on the BBC iPlayer for one month after the original broadcast <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tp7r>

### **Some Practices for Prayer:**

#### *Prayers of Preparation:*

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

God be in my head, and in my  
understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at mine end, and at my departing.  
Amen

## *Different ways to pray:<sup>1</sup>*

### The Examen:

This is one way to pray and ask God into each day. It is often a practice used at the end of each day, though can be prayed anytime. The Examen prayer has five steps:

1. Try to focus on God's presence with you or ask God to help you remember that God is with you and cares for you
2. Review the day behind you, with gratitude as best you can. *Such as: Thank you God for...*
3. Pay attention to your feelings about the day. *Such as: God, today my heart has been touched by joy, sorrow, fear, and/or pain in these ways...*
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray about that. *Such as: Loving God, what I need from you today is...*
5. Look to tomorrow. What are your hopes and what are your hesitations? Ask God to help you remember that God is with you.

### Lectio Divina:

This prayer helps you to pray while reading Scripture. First pick a short passage of Scripture (some suggestions are below, but it can be anything you like). Read the passage slowly two or three times. Now, ask: What jumps out to you? What might God be saying to you here? How might this passage apply to your life? Is there a phrase that speaks to you today? Then read it again. Now ask: What do you want to say to God? and say that to God in prayer.

Psalms 23	Matthew 6.25-34
Psalms 46	Matthew 11.28-29
Psalms 62.8	John 14.1-7
Psalms 139 (pick a few verses as your focus)	John 17.18-23
Isaiah 43.1-4	Romans 8.28-38
Isaiah 49.1-4	Philippians 4.4-13
Jeremiah 29.11-14a	Colossians 3.12-17
Habakkuk 3.17-19	1 Peter 5.6-7
Micah 6.8	Revelation 21.1-4

All of these can be found at <http://bible.oremus.org/> if you don't have ready access to a Bible at home.

### Silence:

Sometimes sitting in silence can be a powerful way to pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you.

### Music/Hymns:

You might find it helpful to listen to favourite hymns or worship songs, or other pieces of music that have a special meaning for you. For example, here is a collection of 'Popular hymns' that you can listen to: <http://bit.ly/PopularHymns> (collected by an Anglican priest). These include: Abide with me, All things Bright and Beautiful, Amazing Grace, Jerusalem the Golden, Be Still my Soul, Blest are the Pure in Heart, Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, Eternal Father Strong to Save, Jesus Lover of my Soul, and many more (note that there are some Easter hymns in this mix...)!

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<sup>1</sup> With gratitude for resources produced by The Revd Jo Kershaw of the North Wakefield Benefice.

Psalms (assembled by the Revd Dr Melody Knowles):

The psalms have given voice to human anxiety and prayer for centuries. Here are some ancient prayers for those who are anxious:

“Listen to my cry for help, for I have been brought very low.”

*Prayers for help: Psalms 27, 90, 138, and 142*

“I have taken refuge in you.”

*Prayers expressing confidence in God’s protection: Psalms 46, 91, 100, and 121*

“I sought the LORD, and God answered me.”

*Prayers of thanksgiving for God’s salvation: Psalms 34 and 116*

“Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul?”

*Prayers of encouragement to trust in God: Psalms 42, 71, 77, and 130*

## **Prayers**

### **General Prayers for this Time**

God of the present moment,  
God who in Jesus stills the storm  
and soothes the frantic heart;  
bring hope and courage to us as we wait in uncertainty.  
Bring hope that you will make us the equal  
of whatever lies ahead.  
Bring us courage to endure what cannot be avoided,  
for your will is health and wholeness;  
you are God, and we need you. Amen.

*New Zealand Prayer Book*

Loving God,  
we pray for all those who are suffering because of the coronavirus,  
may they know your healing power.  
When we are afraid for ourselves and our loved ones,  
give us your strength and courage.  
When we feel alone and isolated,  
reassure us with a sense of your presence.  
Give wisdom to those in authority  
and may our community work together for the good of all.  
We give thanks for those who care for others  
and ask you to bless them in all they do.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, healer and physician. Amen

*Diocese of Bath and Wells*

Sovereign God,  
the defence of those who trust in you  
and the strength of those who suffer:  
look with mercy on our affliction  
and deliver us through our mighty Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

O God, our sovereign and our shepherd,  
who brought again your Son Jesus Christ from the valley of death,  
comfort us with your protecting presence  
and your angels of goodness and love,  
that we also may come home  
and dwell with him in your house for ever. Amen.

Lord God, whose Son, Jesus Christ,  
understood people's fear and pain  
before they spoke of them,  
we pray for those in hospital or sick at home;  
surround the frightened with your tenderness;  
give strength to those in pain;  
hold the weak in your arms of love,  
and give hope and patience  
to those who are recovering;  
we ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,  
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:  
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,  
and inwardly in our souls;  
that we may be defended from all adversities  
    which may happen to the body,  
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you taught us to love our neighbour,  
and to care for those in need  
as if we were caring for you.  
In this time of anxiety, give us strength  
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,  
and to assure the isolated  
of our love, and your love,  
for your name's sake. Amen.



God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;  
in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*All from Common Worship*

O gracious and holy Father,  
give us wisdom to perceive you,  
diligence to seek you,  
patience to wait for you,  
eyes to behold you,  
a heart to meditate upon you,  
and a life to proclaim you,  
through the power of the spirit  
of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*St Benedict*

### **Prayer for those who are Ill or Isolated**

Merciful God,  
we entrust to your tender care  
those who are ill or in pain,  
knowing that whenever danger threatens  
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.  
Comfort and heal them,  
and restore them to health and strength;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, help me to trust you,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing can separate me  
from your love  
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are not people of fear:  
we are people of courage.  
We are not people who protect our own safety:  
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.  
We are not people of greed:  
we are people of generosity.  
We are your people God,  
giving and loving,  
wherever we are, whatever it costs  
For as long as it takes  
wherever you call us. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,  
'I am with you always'.  
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.  
Hear my prayers for others and for myself,  
and keep me in your care. Amen.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

*from St Patrick's Breastplate*

Almighty God: Our times are in your hand.  
We call upon you in this hour of our need, when we are lonely and must stand apart.  
Be our strength, O Sovereign Lord, our calm in the midst of raging seas, our refuge and our dwelling place. Sanctify to us this time drawn away from others, even as your Son, O Father, drew away to a lonely place for prayer. Deepen our need of you, O Lord, that every breath may be a whisper of the Spirit's prompting, a renewed searching of the deep things of God. Stir up in us the great act of intercession, that we may spend our time apart in prayer for the world you created and sustain. Bless us in our turning toward you, and make us a blessing to those who stand in need of you, the whole fragile earth.  
All this we ask in the name of great Physician, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Revd Dr Kate Sonderegger*

Be with us, Lord, in all our prayers,  
and direct our way toward the attainment of salvation,  
that among the changes and chances of this mortal life,  
we may always be defended by your gracious help,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Common Worship*

Suffering God,  
your Beloved Son endured temptations and the wilderness for forty days after his Baptism.  
New life gave him suffering.  
The Light was dark and the Word without a voice.  
From the solitary Jesus we learn that the broken bread is our only food.  
For once and always, O Lord, be present to those in self-quarantine.  
Give them ears to hear you say: "I am here."  
Give them the grace to breathe in the perfect love that casts out fear.  
Give them food for their bodies and hope for their beings.  
This is our prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ.  
In the healing name of Jesus, we make our petitions. Amen.

*The Revd Dr Barney Hawkins*

## **Prayer for hospital staff and medical researchers**

Gracious God,  
give skill, sympathy and resilience  
to all who are caring for the sick,  
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.  
Strengthen them with your Spirit,  
that through their work many will be restored to health;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Church of England Liturgical Commission*

This hour we turn to you, O Lord, in full knowledge of our frailty, our vulnerability, and our great need as your mortal creatures.  
We cry to you, as one human family, unsure of the path ahead, unequal to the unseen forces around us, frightened by the sickness and death that seem all too real to us now.  
Stir up your strength and visit us, O Lord; be our shield and rock and hiding place! Guide our leaders, our scientists, our nurses and doctors. Give them wisdom and fill their hearts with courage and determination.  
Make even this hour, O Lord, a season of blessing for us, that in fear we find you mighty to save, and in illness or death, we find the cross to be none other than the way of life.  
All this we ask in the name of the One who bore all our infirmities, even Jesus Christ our Risen and Victorious Lord. Amen.

*The Revd Dr Kate Sonderegger*

## **Prayers for the Night**

Be present, O merciful God,  
and protect us through the silent hours of this night,  
so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,  
may rest upon your eternal changelessness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Abide with us, Lord, for it is evening,  
and day is drawing to a close.  
Abide with us and with your whole Church,  
in the evening of the day,  
in the evening of life,  
in the evening of the world;  
abide with us and with all your faithful ones, O Lord,  
in time and in eternity. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,  
who at this evening hour lay in the tomb  
and so hallowed the grave  
to be a bed of hope for all who put their trust in you:  
give us such sorrow for our sins,  
which were the cause of your passion,  
that when our bodies lie in the dust,  
our souls may live with you forever. Amen.

*Both from Common Worship*

God our Father, by whose mercy  
the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light:  
we place in your hands our unfinished tasks,  
our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes,  
knowing that only what you bless will prosper.  
To your love and protection  
we commit each other and all those we love,  
knowing that you alone are our sure defender,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Church of South India*

Lord, it is night.  
The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.  
It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be.  
The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.  
The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace.  
The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities.  
In your name we pray. Amen.

*From New Zealand Prayer Book*

## Resources for Families and Children at Home

A number of resources exist for families and children at home, especially in the Lenten season. Check out some of these:

<https://buildfaith.org/lent/>

This website has links to resources and activities for children of all ages, as well as an article on 'Coronavirus, Anxiety, Children and the Church'.

<https://lessonplansthatwork.org/lent-2/lent-year-a/>

This website has lots of worksheets and activities that are for under 5 and 5-11 year olds. Each week there are new topics with readings, activities, and prayers.

<https://www.vts.edu/lifelong-learning/christian-formation-and-discipleship/resources-and-curriculum/episcopal-childrens-curriculum#>

This website has lots of links for children including puzzle packs, art projects, and some worksheets.

<http://www.dofaithathome.org/>

This site has links for each day for things that children can Hear, Do, Pray, Watch, and Read. For example, the one for 16 March includes as the 'Do' activity, asking children to think about how to care for themselves when they are afraid, linking this to one verse from Mark's gospel.

[www.storymakersnyc.com/sparks](http://www.storymakersnyc.com/sparks)

This is a fun website that takes the gospel reading for each Sunday and turns it into a children's story, with pictures, questions, and sometimes videos.

## Prayers with Children

A prayer for when a friend is ill

Dear God, (*name of friend*) is ill.

They are not allowed to go to school or come over to play.

I'm sad because I miss them.

They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well.

Please be close to them.

Please be with the people who are looking after them.

Please help them to get better and to know that you love them. Amen.

### A prayer for the world

God of love and hope,  
you made the world and care for all creation,  
but the world feels strange right now.  
The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.  
Some people are worried that they might get ill.  
Others are anxious for their family and friends.  
Be with them and help them to find peace.  
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,  
and all who are working to discover the right medicines  
to help those who are ill.  
Thank you that even in these anxious times, you are with us.  
Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe. Amen.

### A prayer at bedtime

Before the ending of the day,  
Creator of the world, we pray  
That you, with steadfast love, would keep  
Your watch around us while we sleep.  
Tonight we pray especially for *(names family or friends who are affected by Coronavirus)* and  
the people of *(country or place which is affected by Coronavirus)*.  
Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them. Amen.

### A prayer remembering God is with us

Lord God, you are always with me.  
You are with me in the day and in the night.  
You are with me when I'm happy and when I'm sad.  
You are with me when I'm healthy and when I am ill.  
You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried.  
Today I am feeling *(name how you are feeling)* because *(reasons you are feeling this way)*.  
Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything today. Amen.

## Some podcasts for Lenten Study (and more generally)

### On Being

Nicholas Christakis: How We're Wired for Goodness -

<https://onbeing.org/programs/nicholas-christakis-how-were-wired-for-goodness/>

Serene Jones: On Grace - <https://onbeing.org/programs/serene-jones-on-grace/>

Gordon Hempton: Silence and the Presence of Everything -

<https://onbeing.org/programs/gordon-hempton-silence-and-the-presence-of-everything/>

Pádraig Ó Tuama: Belonging Creates and Undoes Us -

<https://onbeing.org/programs/padraig-o-tuama-belonging-creates-and-undoes-us/>

Mary Oliver: Listening to the World: <https://onbeing.org/programs/mary-oliver-listening-to-the-world-jan2019/>

### Podacre with Prof Mark Goodacre

A study of Passion Narratives (the stories of the crucifixion of Jesus) in 6 different short podcasts: [https://podacre.blogspot.com/search/label/Passion Narratives](https://podacre.blogspot.com/search/label/Passion%20Narratives)

### Spend time studying one biblical book

Nine videos introducing the book of 1 Peter (scroll to the bottom) in preparation for the Anglican Communion's Lambeth Conference this summer:

<https://www.lambethconference.org/biblical-focus/>

### Sunday Morning Matinee (with the Christian Century)

Podcast that looks at recent (and older) movies and the church:

<https://www.christiancentury.org/sunday-morning-matinee>

### By the Well

If you can't get to church, this weekly podcast with a Biblical scholar and a minister (both from the Uniting Church in Australia) explores the set texts for worship each week:

<https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/by-the-well-fran-barber-robyn-whitaker-y42vEPIDZmj/>

## Other Resources

### Poetry:

The Poetry Foundation offers a Poem of the Day:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/poem-of-the-day>

### Art:

Many museums around the world have put free virtual tours and access to their collections online.

These include the collections of more than 2000 (!) museums such as the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the MoMA in New York, the Van Gogh Museum and Rijks Museum in Amsterdam, the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Pera Museum in Istanbul, and the Museo Dolores Olmedo in Mexico City (and of course some closer to home such as the V&A, the Lowry, and the National Gallery). <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en>

You can also take a virtual of these museums, literally 'walking' through the museum on your computer! For example: The British Museum can be found here:

(<https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com>). And 12 more, which can be found here (when you open each link to 'virtual tour', you just have to click on the picture of the little



person at the top of each page and that takes you inside the museum!):

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

### Music:

The Metropolitan Opera is offering a series of free operas each evening at 7.30pm that are available for 24 hours. You can find them here: <https://www.metopera.org>

### Reading:

Forward Movement Press has made their materials available for free:

<https://news.forwardmovement.org/2020/03/forward-movement-offers-resources-for-prayer-and-worship-at-home/> These include resources for families, groups online, and individuals and include morning prayer, daily devotions, podcasts, and some online classes on prayer.

### Mental Health:

MIND has some helpful guidance for those self-isolating and all who are anxious:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

### Addiction Support:

As many groups are unable to meet in person, a number are offering online meetings such as AA (<http://aa-intergroup.org/>) and NA (<https://online.ukna.org/>).