

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



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 16 January 2022**

**Epiphany 2**

Welcome to this week's edition of our Prayers and Reflections. After a baptism, we have a wedding, one that is, perhaps, the best known wedding in the whole wide world. Of course, it is the wedding in Cana in Galilee. Unlike other weddings, it is famous for one who is there - Jesus. The happy couple's names are unknown. I do pray that their married life was as blessed by God's generous love as their wedding celebration.

If you are or have been married, I invite you to pause as you prepare to journey with these prayers and reflections. Recall your wedding service, when you made your loving promises, and your wedding reception, where you celebrated with your family and friends. Where was God in your love and joy and happiness? And, in the daily delights and occasional challenges of married life? Say what you wish to God in the stillness.

May God's abundant love fill your heart and home as Epiphany continues.  
God bless,

**Revd Katrina**

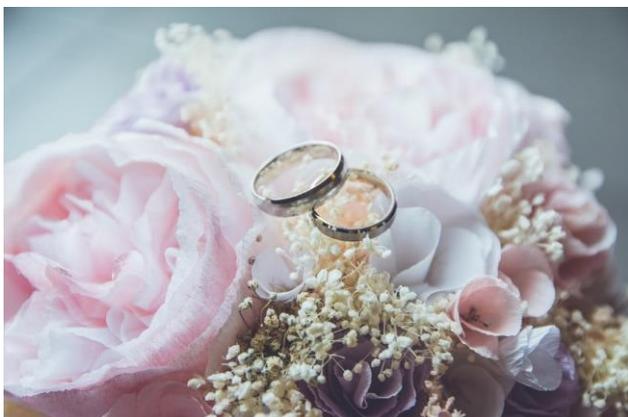
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### **A Hymn of Divine Love**



Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, thou art all compassion,  
pure unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788) alt.*

# Prayers and Reflections for use at home

## God delights in us

### 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 cross in your palm, or on the table, and a bowl of water ready for the time of confession.*

Lord, in stillness, I come seeking your peace and calm,  
abide with me. Reveal afresh to me  
the wonder of your presence.

Open my heart  
to the intensity of your love.

Open my mind  
to your guiding of my life.

Here, I am -

I am yours. **Amen.**

### LETTING GO

*If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And, when you are ready, reflect on this verse from our hymn of divine love.*

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit  
into every troubled breast;  
let us all in thee inherit,  
let us find thy promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning,  
Alpha and Omega be;  
end of faith, as its beginning,  
set our hearts at liberty.



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

*God is setting you free to live with love in your heart for everyone. Give thanks to him for the family and friends who light up your life with their love. As you give thanks, name them one by one. Pray for them. And then, when you are ready, move on to think about the people in your life that you find difficult to love. Why might this be? Seek God's loving and wise guidance.*



Father, I place into your hands  
my friends and family.  
Father, I place into your hands  
the things that trouble me.  
Father, I place into your hands  
the person I would be,  
for I know I always can trust you.

*Jenny Hewer (b. 1945)  
© 1975 Thankyou Music  
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## **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 our loving Father.*

Almighty God,  
in Christ you make all things new:  
transform the poverty of our nature  
by the riches of your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Epiphany is all about God revealing who Jesus is. Last week, through  
Jesus' baptism, we saw how much the Father loves his only Son. He is  
God's beloved One. This week, through the wedding at Cana, we will see  
how much his Son loves us. He has the power to transform our lives.*

*As you re-read this week's prayer, open your heart to him. He is listening. Seek his help. How can he bless you at this time? How can he transform your life through the power of his love?*



The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord look kindly on you,  
and give you peace.

*Numbers 6:24-26*

## **LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD**

### **The Wedding in Cana**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

*John 2:1-11*

## Partying with us!

*I do love the idea of Jesus and his team being invited to a wedding. It is a sign that God's Son is truly one of us. He is here to celebrate with the happy couple and their families and friends.*

*God with us is partying with us!*

*I find this a delightful image.*

*Imagine Jesus at the wedding reception - the party - do you see him joining in with the eating and drinking? Singing and dancing? Can you feel his joy and happiness?*

*What does this reveal to you about Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us?*

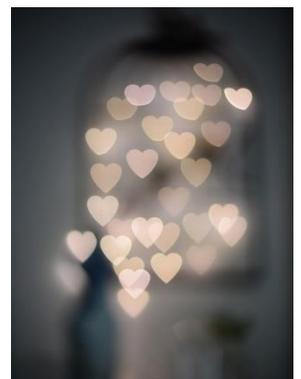
And the Word became flesh and lived among us,  
and we have seen his glory,  
the glory as of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth.

*John 1:14*

*I expect that you have heard the phrase, 'Like father, like son.' If the Jesus we see at the wedding in Cana is a mirror image of his Father in heaven, then this suggests that our lives bring joy and delight to God too. God is there when we making our loving vows... and, he is there when we party after the service... our happiness fills him with happiness.*

*As you recall your own wedding day or think of weddings that have been, or will be, special to you, think about God's delight in your love and joy, your hopes and dreams. Feel the abundance of his love.*

*It is a love that holds us from before our first breath, through all the joys and woes of life, to our parting moments. Pause to feel his love... and to offer yours to him... give thanks with a grateful heart.*



## **Overflowing with generosity...**

*Running out of wine at a wedding party would have been an absolute disaster to the host. Embarrassing! The father would never have been able to live this down. Whenever his child's wedding came up in conversation, this is the one thing that would have been remembered! Not the joy and happiness of the couple... or the many hours of joyous partying... or the plates full of delicious food... or the copious amounts of wine drunk... just the horror of horrors, when the wine stopped flowing before guests were ready to go home. The story of what happened at this wedding in Cana would have lived on for years.*

*Thanks to what Jesus did - nudged by his mother Mary - this wedding is still talked about two thousand years on for all the right reasons.*

*I wonder how much wine was needed to keep the party going?*

*When I do the maths, six stone jars - each one about six feet high - filled with 25 gallons of clean pure H<sub>2</sub>O - Jesus provided about 150 gallons or 800 bottles of the best-quality wine.*

*It is the sheer abundance of fine wine that always strikes me about Jesus' first sign - his debut miracle - at the wedding in Cana. He provides wine in abundance. Way more wine than this party needed. Wine to bless this family for days and days as they wondered how the wine did keep on flowing. Jesus' over-the-top response to this embarrassing problems reflects the generous abundance of his Father's love and care for us.*

*When have you experienced God's generosity and abundance?*

## **OUR PRAYERS**

*Here are some prayers on the theme of God's delight in us.*

*Feel free to add your own.*

Heavenly Father, as I think of your Son enjoying the wedding in Cana, joining in with the joy and happiness of the couple, and their families and friends, I see how much you delight in us, in our daily lives. Thank you for your love for me, and your delight over the years.

When life is tough or I am filled with sadness,  
remind me of your gentle and gracious love for me.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Father, when we act with love and kindness,  
with justice and fairness, you delight in us.

Yet - all is not as it should be. When I think of the issues in the news,  
I feel your pain. Lord, come and transform the lives of your hurting ones  
by working on the hearts of those causing their suffering. I pray for...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Father, you have the power to wipe away our tears,  
and to lighten our sorrows, by offering us your peace and hope.  
Trusting in the abundance of your love, I lift up to you...

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 lie open to your gaze.

You always know how I am feeling. You guide my daily living.

Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**