

RESPONDING TO THE PSALMS – February 2026

a project of the Spirituality Committee of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

We offer the Sunday Responsorial Psalm as a focus for prayer and reflection during the week ahead for yourself or to share with others.

You could note your own thoughts as a possible personal journal.

We keep two Sundays of Ordinary time and then comes Ash Wednesday 2026.

As we move into Lent it would be good to stop and think what does this season mean to us and how we see it as a time of grace.

The Church tells us that it "is the special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of God."¹

How will we make that our journey this year?

In laying on us the light cross of ashes the Church desires to take off our shoulders all other heavy burdens- the crushing load of worry and oppressive guilt, the dead weight of our own self love. We should not take upon ourselves a burden of penance and stagger into Lent as if we were Atlas carrying the whole world on his shoulders.

Thomas Merton

*It is to fast from strife and old debate,
And hate; to circumcise thy life.
To show a heart, grief-rent;
To starve thy sin, not bin;
and that's to keep thy Lent.*

Robert Herrick

In Lent the whole church becomes a catechumen, receiving instruction from the Word of God, a penitent practising ascetical exercises. She meditates on the Word, and cleanses herself, so that, enlightened and free, she may receive the grace of Easter, and experience more vividly the joy of salvation which comes with the Risen Christ.

Luigi della Torre

Sunday 1 February

Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Sunday 8 February

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Sunday 15 February

Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Wednesday 18 February

Ash Wednesday

Sunday 22 February

First Sunday of Lent

¹ [Ceremonial of Bishops]

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

It is the LORD who preserves fidelity for ever,
who does justice to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the LORD who sets prisoners free.

We pray for the strength to be faithful to our baptismal calling.

*Pray a litany for people in need – think of specific people locally or universally and how you can help them:
the oppressed, the hungry, all imprisoned unjustly*

The LORD who opens the eyes of the blind,
the LORD who raises up those who are bowed down.
It is the LORD who loves the just,
the LORD who protects the stranger.

*Pray a litany for people in need – think of specific people locally or universally and how you can help them:
the blind [physically and spiritually], those who hunger for the truth.
the stranger, the refugee, the lonely,*

The LORD upholds the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.

The LORD will reign for ever,
your God, O Sion, from age to age.

*We pray to find ways help the orphan and abandoned, the widow and widower
We pray that God's goodness will overpower wickedness and evil in our world.*

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 112(111):4-5. 6-7. 8a, 9. ~~R~~4a

A LIGHT RISES IN THE DARKNESS FOR THE UPRIGHT.

A light rises in the darkness for the upright;

he is generous, merciful, and righteous.

It goes well for the man who deals generously and lends,

who conducts his affairs with justice.

Let us pray to find ways to increase our generosity, our mercy, our basic goodness

We thank God for people we can name who have been generous to us,

who have shared what they have with us, who have treated us with justice and kindness

He will never be moved;

for ever shall the upright be remembered.

He has no fear of evil news;

with a firm heart, he trusts in the LORD.

Let us pray for the gift of constancy and reliability as Christian believers

Let us ask for the ability to cope with any challenges we face because we can trust wholeheartedly in the Lord

With a steadfast heart he will not fear.

Open-handed, he gives to the poor;

his justice stands firm for ever.

His might shall be exalted in glory.

Let us pray for all those people and organisations who serve the poor and needy in our name

Let us remember times when we have not been just and see if we can repair what was done

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 119(118):1-2. 4-5. 17-18. 33-34. ~~R~~1b

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WALK IN THE LAW OF THE LORD!

Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD!

Blessed are those who keep his decrees!

With all their hearts they seek him.

Who are the saints that inspire you? Think about what makes them important to you.

Ask their intercession and support.

You have laid down your precepts
to be carefully kept.

May my ways be firm

in keeping your statutes.

Take time to think about what place God's commandments have in your daily life

Ask for the strength to keep them well

Deal bountifully with your servant,
that I may live and keep your word.

Open my eyes, that I may see

the wonders of your law.

Stop and reflect on or read the passage[s] of scriptures that mean[s] most to you.

Meditate on what it/they challenge[s] you to do in your life

LORD, teach me the way of your statutes,
and I will keep them to the end.

Grant me insight that I may keep your law,
and observe it wholeheartedly.

Love God with your whole heart is the first commandment. Will you keep it to the end?

Love your neighbour as yourself is the second. Do you observe it wholeheartedly?

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 51(50):3-4. 5-6b. 12-13. 14, 17. *R* cf. 3a

HAVE MERCY ON US, O LORD, FOR WE HAVE SINNED.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your merciful love;
according to your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.

Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

Begin Lent by praying the prayers you receive the ashes

TURN AWAY FROM SIN AND BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL

REMEMBER YOU ARE DUST AND TO DUST YOU WILL RETURN

My transgressions, truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

Stop and reflect on the sin that you find most difficult to avoid. Make that your focus to change this week

Think of the holiness of God

Create a pure heart for me, O God;
renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence;
take not your holy spirit from me.

Reflect on what a pure heart and a steadfast spirit actually mean for your daily living

Pray for a pure heart and a steadfast spirit as you begin Lent

Restore in me the joy of your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.

O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Reflect on what joy we have when we feel forgiven by anyone, especially the Lord

Praise God because he does not condemn but forgives sin

Responsorial Psalm

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Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

*Reflect on how Jesus had to withstand temptations – pray for the same strength
Stop and consider what Lent has meant to you so far and what is your resolution this week*

My transgressions, truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

*Think about one sin that is always cropping up in your life. Ask for the strength to put it aside
Pray the words of the “Holy holy” from the mass. Reflect on God’s holiness and our weakness*

Create a pure heart for me, O God;
renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence;
take not your holy spirit from me.

*No child ever wants to hear a parent cast them off.
Think about how we are children of the Father who never rejects anyone.
Ponder on the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life*

Restore in me the joy of your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

*Think about what a willing spirit means in your life and then pray for a willing spirit for you
Try to make the Sundays in Lent times of joy and praise for they always celebrate the Resurrection*