

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 16C

20th July 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Use the following words to help centre yourself in the moment. Say them out loud, or speak them in your mind.

Jesus, open my heart.

Prepare yourself to hear God's word in a new way.

Jesus, open my heart.

Listen for God's voice, calling you to serve others and love radically.

Jesus, open my heart.

Hold the joys, regrets and frustrations from the week, and look ahead to the opportunities next week will bring.

Jesus, open my heart.

Hold the people you share your life with, and the challenges that come with relationships and friendships.

Jesus, open my heart.

Rest a moment in the quiet.

Jesus, open my heart.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Reading: Luke 10:38-42 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

As you read today's gospel reading from Luke 10, you might like to picture Jesus, in the home of his friends, the two sisters Martha and Mary. Martha is busy with the tasks of hospitality, while Mary sits at Jesus' feet, listening intently to his words. When Martha complains that Mary isn't helping, Jesus gently responds, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing."

It's a short story, but one that has sparked centuries of reflection, and for good reason. It speaks to the tension many of us feel between doing and being, between action and contemplation, between responsibility and presence.

And let's be honest: many of us feel like Martha. We're pulled in a dozen directions, busy with good and necessary things: work, caregiving, activism, community, housework, salaried work, church jobs. We're trying to make the world more just, more compassionate, more whole. And that's not wrong.

But Jesus' words invite us to pause and ask: Where is my attention?

This is not a condemnation of Martha's work, or of the many acts of service that discipleship requires. Rather, it's a reminder that our doing must flow from our being: with

Christ, grounded in grace. If we are always distracted, even by good things, we can miss the presence of God right in front of us.

Mary chooses the “better part,” not because she is more holy or more helpful, but because in that moment, she allows herself to be fully present to Jesus. She gives him the gift of her attention. And in doing so, she receives something deeper than another task or obligation – she receives grace.

I don’t know about you, but lots of our Christian journey has been learning and thinking about how to put our faith into action, and rightly so. But this passage reminds us that activism, hospitality, and service need to be nourished by stillness, reflection, and spiritual attentiveness. We are not just changemakers; we are followers of Christ, who longs not only for our hands but for our hearts.

So today, consider:

- Where am I being pulled in too many directions?
- How might I create space to sit, to listen, to be fully present with God?
- How can I let my action be rooted more deeply in grace?

Discipleship isn’t about doing everything. It’s about doing the right things from the right place. And sometimes, the most faithful thing we can do is stop, breathe, and listen.

May we find, like Mary, the grace to choose the better part, and the courage to trust that it will not be taken from us.

Responding in prayer

Day by day,

I ask for the vision to see you more clearly, especially in the faces, bodies and lives of those I least expect to reveal you.

I long to see you more clearly in the actions of the most powerful people on earth; seeing those who have exploited others change their ways dramatically.

I long to see you more clearly through the Bible as I wrestle with its wisdom and terror. I long to see you more clearly in my neighbours and friends, and to hear you speak, Lord. Although Scripture says we see through a glass darkly while on earth, please grant us clarity to see exactly what you would have us do and be for you, day by day, in these testing times for Christian faith and life.

Day by day, day by day, of You - Dear Lord - three things we pray:

To see You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly, day by day.

Day by day,

I commit myself to expressing more love for You, Lord, through my words and actions. I pray for your gracious help as I try to love you more dearly by caring for our aching planet; by speaking out with firm, brave and risky love in situations crying out for that; by going the extra mile when I am already weary, and by holding your cross before my eyes when I walk into a future that scares me.

On the days when my love for you grows weak, thank you that your love burns more fiercely than ever. It is more than I deserve, and I am deeply grateful.

Day by day, day by day, of You - Dear Lord - three things we pray:

To see You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly, day by day.

Amen.

Responding in music

552 STF – Here I am, Lord - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

I shall go out with joy, and be sent forth with peace.

I shall seek to know you more, Lord Jesus, and to follow in your way.

I hold together, in you, Jesus the Christ,

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 21st July

- A cup of tea:
- When you have a drink of tea/coffee (or your favourite hot beverage) pay attention to the hospitality you have received over a cuppa over the years. Give thanks for conversations held, comforting words and companionable silences. Ask God how you in turn can offer hospitality to others.

Tuesday 22nd July

- Day by day, day by day, of You - Dear Lord - three things we pray:
 - To see You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly, day by day.
- Amen.

Wednesday 23rd July

- Try to be attentive to the time during your day. On every hour and half hour pause, whether you're at home, work or simply out and about, and take notice of what you're doing. It may be doing the ironing. It may be watching the telly. It may be sending an email. It may be snoozing under a blanket. Whatever it is - give thanks to God for the technology that enables it, the blessings it brings, the people you encounter through it. Do this throughout your day and count your blessings.

Thursday 24th July

- Loving God, today I hold in prayer all involved in tackling housing and homelessness issues in the UK and beyond. As so many people are affected by poor housing or left with no option but to sleep rough, may the decision makers, the charity workers and the property developers work together to make the world a better, safer place for everyone.
- In the name of the one who has always cared about justice and peace, Jesus Christ, I pray
Amen.

Friday 25th July

- Praying and breathing.
- Rest a while and settle yourself into a comfortable position. Pay attention to your breathing.
- Breathe as slowly as you're able and try to find a rhythm. As you breathe in accept the love and goodness of God as yours. As you breathe out press your fears and worries into Gods hands.
- Try to do this in a thought through way until it becomes almost natural. It will find its own end.

Saturday 26th July

- Take a look out of your nearest window. What do you see?
- The natural earth, the spaces we live in, the vehicles we move around in the paths we walk on, all are made from the source that is God.
- Share with your creator God all the things you marvel at and are bothered by. Ask how you can best enable others to do the same.