

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

PRAYER: LEARNING TOGETHER

- ❖ Bishop Sophie, speaking at the Learning Together Day in November 2025, shared that James Houston’s “The Transforming Friendship: A Guide to Prayer” (Regent College, 1996) had been very significant to her own faith and prayer journey.
- ❖ Bishop Sophie spoke about her ‘favourite subject’ *discernment*, seeing what God does in the lives of other people – the ones who make up His church. She said, ‘God loves to speak with His people – often deep truths; yet hearing God can be very difficult. She encouraged us to think about the relationship we have with God – we hear the best in relationship with Him.
- ❖ Rather than prayer being a burdensome list, Bishop Sophie spoke of how prayer can have a place in the daily rhythm of our lives – remember, Jesus called us friends (John 15) – ‘he wants us to hang out with Him, and He will begin to speak.’
- ❖ *How?* SILENCE, IN A CAR, IN PICTURES, IN DREAMS, WALKING, RUNNING, SWIMMING, CREATIVE ARTS, SCRIPTURE, LECTIO DIVINA, RIGOROUS BIBLE STUDY, IMAGINATIVE (IGNATIAN), EVEN SMELL.
- ❖ Bishop Sophie called us to lay down our own agendas, to watch and wait through the Advent season into 2026.
- ❖ In the first editions of the *The Prayer Diary* I edited (back in February–November 2023), extracts from **Taylor Staton’s “Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools – an invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer”** (Hodder & Stoughton, 2022) featured for ten months. It was good to have it recommended by our guest speaker, Phil Sokell-Miles, from 24/7 Prayer, as he co-led the Learning Together Day in November..
- ❖ Phil spoke of a slowing down of our lives, ‘not doing more’ but rather *Doing and Being differently*. He spoke of Zinzendorf and the Moravians who started an unbroken chain of prayer that impacted the Wesleys and Methodism, he explained how this influence Pete Greig in 1999 to start what we now know as 24/7 Prayer.
- ❖ **Revive the church; call her back to prayer.**



DIOCESE^{OF}
COVENTRY

pray for the Diocese *as a whole*

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>'My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life'. John 10.10 (NLT)</p> <p>2026 is full of fresh possibilities and hope for the Diocese, after an Advent focus on Watching and Waiting we will be engaging with Bishop Sophie to explore the vision for us all.</p>				<p>1</p> <p>Bishop's Council, and the staff based at Bishop's House</p>	<p>2</p> <p>For a Spirit of Prayer and Intercession across the Diocese in 2026</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Energy for Evangelism and other forms of outreach & service</p>
<p>CHRISTMAS 2 4</p> <p>The Diocese of Coventry <i>Bishop Sophie</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>The Diocese of Coventry <i>Jacqueline Ladds</i> Diocesan Secretary</p>	<p>EPIPHANY 6</p> <p>The Archdeacon Team <i>Barry Dugmore and Tim Cockell</i></p>	<p>7</p> <p><i>Karen Birch</i>, the Director of Finance and the team</p>	<p>8</p> <p><i>Rob Harrison with Anna Naish</i> developing learning pathways</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Healthy communities, with churches a catalyst for change.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>The Diocese of Coventry <i>Jet Jones</i> and the Together for Change team</p>
<p>BAPTISM OF CHRIST 11</p> <p>For many new believers and disciples in 2026 – for <i>'rich and satisfying lives.'</i></p>	<p>12</p> <p>Our Area Deans, Deanery Synods and Deanery Chapters (clergy)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Andy Waddams and the Communications Team</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Parish Support from the Diocesan team based at 1 Hilltop,</p>	<p>15</p> <p>For the EQUIP Hub, supported so well by <i>Ryan Finnegan</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p>For Mission Hubs and Urban Plants across the Diocese</p>	<p>17</p> <p>For our Diocesan Safeguarding Team, led by <i>Sarah Price</i>; all DSOs.</p>
<p>EPIPHANY 2 18</p> <p>WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (18-25 JANUARY)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>For the Chapel of Unity in Coventry Cathedral. <i>Dean - John Witcombe</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p>For City Prayer and Praise in Coventry</p>	<p>21</p> <p>For Hope Coventry, and similar initiatives in Warwickshire</p>	<p>22</p> <p>For churches that <u>you/your church</u> have direct or indirect contact with</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Our Diocesan commitment to Net Zero and Creation Care.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>For Mark Norris and Susan Bowden-Pickstock, supporting vocations</p>
<p>EPIPHANY 3 25</p> <p>For the helpless and homeless on streets across our Diocese. Gratitude for homes.</p>	<p>CONVERSION OF PAUL 26</p> <p>For those receiving careers and vocational support this year</p>	<p>27</p> <p>For all living in poverty; for Christians Against Poverty advisors; for financial advisors.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>For our rural support team and advisors, including the Rural Mission Hub at Alcester</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Learning Together Day Reflecting with Bishop Sophie on vision and possible Diocesan futures.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Young people: Growing Faith, our family, school, church connections.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>For Director <i>Jenny Irvine</i> and the team supporting New Worshipping Communities</p>

PRAYER DIARY

PRAYER (QUOTED BY BROTHER RAMON IN *THE HEART OF PRAYER*)

At times, O Lord, you steal over me irresistibly,
as the ocean slowly covers the shore,
Or suddenly you seize me as the lover clasps his beloved in his arms.
And I am helpless, a prisoner, and I have to stand still.
Captivated, I hold my breath, the world fades away, you suspend time ...
Thank you, Lord, thank you!
Why me, why did you choose me? Joy, joy, tears of joy.

Michel Quoist

"After years of feeling useless and guilty, I began to realize the truth of the comments made by one of the early fathers of the church, Clement of Alexandria. He said that 'prayer is keeping company with God.' This began to give me a new focus on prayer. I began to see prayer more as a friendship than a rigorous discipline. It started to become more of a relationship and less of a performance."

James Houston
The Transforming Friendship

Canticle from Morning Prayer (from Celtic Daily Prayer)

*Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.*

*Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.*



*This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.*

*Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.*

PAUSE FOR PRAYER – in 2026

“A pause allows something to happen which would otherwise not occur, and you never quite know what that will be”

DO / PAUSE: YOU ARE NOT A TO DO LIST – is the title of 2019 book by Robert Poynton. The series of books published by The Do Book Company are handbooks on a wide range of eclectic ‘Do’ topics including: Beekeeping, Design, Disrupt, Improvise, Lead, Listen, Preserve, Story and Sourdough! In Do/PAUSE we are encouraged to design a calendar of pauses – a diary is usually ‘chopped into clearly delineated chunks’ – but what if you invented your own, with different layers of time such as ‘Learning, tasks, loves, distractions – Mind, hand, body, heart – Me, you, them, us – Money, beauty, fun’? we are asked

What would it look like if you more consciously introduced God into your busy diary (or calendar)?

How might His presence direct the tasks you select, the learning you decide is most important, who you pray for, and where you need spaces to be refreshed ... day by day, week, by week, month by month this year?

What will your mind focus on in scripture, on where your steps take you, what exercise your body needs?

Who will you pray for each day, how will you open yourself to be changed by the Holy Spirit, where will God direct you to pray beyond your closest circle of family and friends?

What unexpected adventures and opportunities might come your way?

How might you direct your giving and use of gifts?

What joys lie ahead?



A BLUE-PRINT FOR PRAYER ('PATER NOSTER')

*** Introduction** (we speak to God) Presence – Adoration – Thanksgiving – Examination – Repentance

*** Middle** Learning to Listen (God speaks to us)

*** End** (we speak to God) Needs – Others – Self – Thanksgiving and Examination – Resolutions (for the Future)

From David Torkington in **The Hermit: A Personal Discovery of Prayer** (St Pauls). Later the main character in the novel says how ‘contemplation begins not when we want, but when God wants.’ The Blue-Print is a means and should be dropped temporarily or permanently as it leads to the reality... ‘The reality of God’s love is so close ... that all you will want is to spend the rest of the prayer period in an all-absorbing awareness of this great mystery.’

TIME CAPSULE FOR 2026



It wouldn't be Christmas without a little project or two. This time capsule struck us [at A Rocha] as a lovely way to consider where God might lead us in 2026. It would make a great activity with friends, children and grandchildren.

A new year can be an opportunity for setting goals, new opportunities and taking chances – three things which prayer might help us to see more clearly.

What you need:

Slips of paper, pens, a box or other container.

What to do:

Find a small box or jar (about to hit the recycling pile)!

Pray and ask God for guidance as you approach 2026.

Listen for God's voice - that might be in a word or a feeling or any other way that is personal to you - and write down what comes to you. Any words? Ideas? Areas of your life to work on? Issues you feel are stirring your heart?

Write any prayers you have for 2026, and anything you've heard from God on slips of scrap paper.

Put these slips of paper into your box or jar (You may also want to include these somewhere you will see them regularly, like a journal).

Keep your container safe until the end of 2026. When you open it again at the end of the year, you may find, before you, answers to prayer, areas of your life God has worked in, and situations he has changed for you.

Repeat for 2027!

from an A Rocha UK 'Wild Christian' mailing, 26 Nov 2024

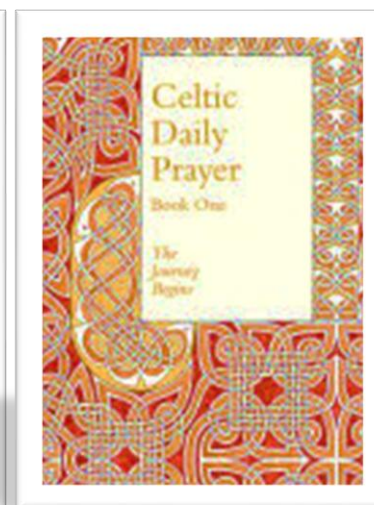
PRAYER – RECOMMENDED READS FROM OTHER TRADITIONS

1. For myself, Brother Ramon's "**The Heart of Prayer: Finding a way to pray**" (Marshall Pickering, 1995), helped me to reflect on my own journey of faith with the *Introduction: Personal Pilgrimage* sharing his journey from childhood mystery (of God the Father), through evangelical experience (God the Son), to the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit. He was a Franciscan monk and hermit.

2. I was also greatly helped by David Torkington's imaginative trilogy of books on prayer – **The Hermit, The Prophet, The Mystic** (Alba House). In journeying with his main character to the Outer Hebrides, he opened up learning to pray through an influential hermit. It is a charming and thoughtful series of short books.

3. I first encountered the Northumbria Community in 1992, and quickly became familiar with their simple offices of Morning Prayer, Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer – memorably learning the sung versions. I have recommended/given as a gift, "**Celtic Daily Prayer, Book 1: The Journey Begins**" (Collins, 2015 edition), and noticed how easily people would say they used this format for prayer for prolonged seasons of their lives.

Clive Hicks



Generally, each month we focus on a different Deanery; this month there is a break in this pattern. The plan is to refresh and simplify the Prayer Diary from February 2026.

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