

**Sunday 8 February 2026,
The Second Sunday before Lent**

Collect:

Almighty God,
give us reverence for all creation
and respect for every person,
that we may mirror your likeness
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings for this week:

Genesis 1:1-2:3; Psalm 136; Romans 8:18-25; Matthew 6:25-34

It feels like a great leap from last week's Candlemass readings, focussing on the forty day old Christ child being presented in the Temple, to the creation of the universe which we meet with this Sunday. We are approaching Lent, when the mature Jesus embraces his destiny, which we also believe heals the rift between creation and God caused by the Fall. So, Genesis' litany of creation, counting through the days with much repetition of the name of God, the creator, and listing the many elements created – mineral, vegetable and animal – sets that destiny rolling, which will reach its climax in the cross. Psalm 136 is also a litany of creation, listing many of the elements that give order, harmony and life to the earth, but also with a reminder of God's care for us, delivering us from our enemies, providing food and displaying enduring mercy.

In Romans, Paul describes with an elegance that reflects the opening chapters of Genesis, creation groaning with desire to be reconciled with God. Paul has been talking about the suffering of Christ on our behalf and has now moved on to the sufferings of the present age. Creation's labour pains mark the birth of that reconciliation through the work of Christ. In the Gospel, Jesus has to deal with the continued worries of his disciples, who, even though they are in his presence, cannot stop fearing for their futures. He refocuses them from future intangibles to being present in the now. He brings them back to the essentials of life. He opens their eyes to the wonder of God's creation all around them, encouraging them to take it seriously, to realise how beautiful it is, to give thanks, to catch a glimpse of heaven in the ordinary and to strive to be part of God's kingdom, which brings to birth a renewal of the divine relationship with all created matter.

God our creator, by your gift
the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise,
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:
may we who have been nourished at your table on earth
be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross
and enjoy the delights of eternity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9
Sunday next before Lent