

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION 27th March 2022

Mothering Sunday

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful
the Lord God made them all.*

1 Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
he made their glowing colours,
he made their tiny wings:

Refrain

2 The purple headed mountain,
the river running by,
the sunset and the morning
that brightens up the sky:

Refrain

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him. Let us then renounce our wilfulness and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love: fill us with your Spirit.

Lord have mercy **Lord, have mercy**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith: fill us with your Spirit.

Christ have mercy **Christ, have mercy**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust: fill us with your Spirit.

Lord have mercy **Lord, have mercy**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: All things bright and beautiful

3 The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden,
he made them every one:

Refrain

4 He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God almighty,
who has made all things well:

Refrain

*Cecil Frances Alexander (née Humphreys)
(1818-1895) Public Domain*

The Collect (special prayer for today)

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

READINGS: Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has

a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

John 19: 25b-27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

REFLECTION

Mothering Sunday invites us to think not only of mothers, but rather of 'mothering'; something which can be done by young or old, male or female. Two weeks ago, when we heard Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, we heard how he wanted to protect the people like a mother hen protects her young. And in our Gospel reading we hear Jesus commending the care of his mother to his friend, and his care to her as mother and son. He is creating a new relationship based on mothering. Surely, this is the sort of relationship that Jesus envisaged developing amongst his followers; amongst us, the Church. We often talk of Mother Church, and like a human mother she is there with us through life's journey.

From the very start of life, it is our parents who teach us who we are, and where we fit in; the early years are so important to our understanding of the world, and our development as individuals. And along with the laughter, and the tears, the praise and the scolding, there are the stories that entertain and educate us, and remain with us into adulthood. And it is the greatest story ever; the story that the Church tells that binds us together as a family. We each have our own story to share as we find our place through prayer and scripture within the continuing story of Jesus; and he becomes an increasingly large part of our story as we journey with him.

Yet, like a mother, the Church's job does not end there. When Jesus said to Mary, 'Woman, here is your son', and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother', that is not the end of it, because we are told 'and from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.' It was not to be a relationship only in words, but one forged in action. Mother Church is there not to bring to birth new Christians, only to leave them to their own devices. She is there to nurture us, like a tender plant, through all the stages and ages of our life. She has to provide rich, diverse, graduated opportunities for people to be formed in Christ's likeness throughout their Christian journey. They need to know that they will be supported if their life unravels, if they find that their faith is tested almost to destruction, if they are in crisis or feel bereft of hope. People

need to know that they can rely on the Church to hold them and support them unconditionally, helping them to discern the gifts that God has given them. But mothering does not mean nannying by over-attention, it is restrained care.

Many people have a fear of coming through the door of the building, whether it is fear of the unknown, or concern that they may be made to feel uncomfortable because they not attended more regularly. The Reverend Roger Spiller wrote, "Mother Church hosts a diversity of people, many of whom would not naturally relate to one another, but find themselves relating through their instinctive relationship with her Lord. She is the one who is not there for her own sake, but for the sake of others. She is there with a low threshold and an open door, avoiding resentment to those who drift in and out, or who 'use' the Church. She is attentive to those who are new, and doesn't take for granted those brothers and sisters who have always been there.'

And, just by way of a reminder, **we** are the Church, you and me; it's a big responsibility. As Paul wrote 'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.' So, let's get mothering!! **Amen**

Prayers

With confidence and trust let us pray to the Father.

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For those preparing for baptism and confirmation, and for their teachers and sponsors, let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For peace in the world, particularly in Ukraine, that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow among nations and peoples, let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer, for refugees, prisoners and all in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For those whom we have injured or offended, let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For the grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God, let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

In communion with all those who have walked the way of holiness let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

God our Father, in your love and goodness you have taught us to come close to you in penitence with prayer, fasting and generosity; accept our Lenten discipline, and when we fall by our weakness, raise us up by your unfailing mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayers from 'Times and Seasons' ©The Archbishops' Council 2006

Gathering together all our prayers, we say the prayer that Jesus gave us

**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**

1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

2 For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light:

Chorus

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth

3 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild:

Chorus

4 For each perfect gift of thine
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:

Chorus

Follitt Sandford Pierpoint (1835-1917)

*We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to
be with us now*

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen**

We pray God's blessing on each other

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and those whom you love and pray for, this day and for evermore.

Amen