

Reflection and Prayers for Mothering Sunday

The Lord be with me, and those who surround me in this world and the next

We speak often of God as Father. We have fathers – some of them have been good fathers and some of them haven't. Some of us are fathers with varying degrees of success. We look to God as Father to help and inspire us towards the best in fatherhood and to understand what makes for healthy fatherhood and what doesn't. We also may find it helpful to speak of God as Mother. We have mothers. Some of our mothers have been good mothers and some of them haven't. Some of us are mothers with varying degrees of success. We may look to God as Mother to help and inspire us towards the best in motherhood and to understand what makes for healthy motherhood and what doesn't.

Collect of the Day

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

Bible Reading: John 19:25-27

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

My thoughts on reading this the first time when I was a new mother and starting my Christian journey was that Jesus was being unfeeling, how can giving John to Mary and Mary to John as a new son and mother possibly any sort of substitute? Of course, knowing his mother had a home and a family in John would be a comfort and strength to Jesus. It shows in the agony of the cross he was still thinking about others, putting himself last.

However, this year I see all around me the wonderful response from our community. In this strange time of social isolation people are being MORE connected, just when for our own safety we are being asked to stay away, through social media, through deliveries and phone calls our community is being made stronger and more robust. We may well need to support of others to navigate this time, but it will change us all. Who is our neighbour? Everyone will be our genuine cry.

So, what if Jesus' work on the cross to give his mother to his friend and visa versa, what if it tells us that we are not meant to be separate families, but one family? Boundaries are blurred and together we are responsible for and to one another. Responsible for making sure that we do not put others at risk by our actions, and for making sure the no one is left unknown and unattended.

Covid19 has taken away our freedom and our safety, but it has given us family, and time to reassess what is really important in life. Land's End people, here is your family. Thank you for caring and living in such a way that we can flourish in the midst of confusion. Pray for one another and love as He loved.

Prayers amended from those written by The Right Reverend Dr Robert Innes

Gracious God, we thank you for the role that so many mothers, fathers and family members played in introducing us to you and your son Jesus Christ, through bedtime prayers and stories, in the way they served as an example of Christian life and introducing us to public worship in our first spiritual homes.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God, as we watch and read the news, we see the brokenness of our world and that for many families life is more dangerous than ever before. We pray for healing among the nations; for food where there is hunger; for freedom where there is oppression; for joy where there is pain; that your love may bring peace to all your children.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Father God, your Son, was born into the human family of Mary and Joseph; bless all those that we live amongst who are parents and all who care for children in our local communities. We especially pray for the families who are self-educating now, for those who are in isolation, and those who are facing financial hardship. Strengthen all families who are living under stress and shine your love into homes where no human love is found.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, like a mother you gather your people to you as gently as any human mother with her children. Turn the despair that comes through the parting of death into hope and may we through your gentleness find comfort and restoration in our sadness and loss.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Everlasting God, you alone can see the future and so we pray to you, who can see ahead of us, asking for your protection for each of us, for our families and those who we love.

Merciful father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

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.

Praise God who loves us.

Praise God who cares.

May God, who gave birth to all creation, bless you:

May God, who became incarnate by an earthly mother, bless you:

May God, who broods as a mother over her children, bless you.

May almighty God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

