



St Martin of Tours Chelsfield

*St Martin's worships and serves a loving God,
reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Sunday 22 March 2020

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT: MOTHERING SUNDAY

Nowadays almost everyone celebrates today as Mother's Day. Young children prepare mum a much-deserved breakfast in bed, older children treating their mother to a quintessentially British afternoon tea. But while we see it as a universally beloved day of affection and celebration of Motherhood, Mothering Sunday isn't technically what you think it is. It's not even the same thing as Mother's Day.

Mothering Sunday began as an explicitly religious event of the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all. The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church", which is to say the main church or cathedral of the region. It became a tradition that, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church for a special service. This pilgrimage was apparently known as "going a-mothering", and became something of a holiday event, with domestic servants given the day off to visit their own families as well as their mother church.

Today many of us will be unable to visit either our mothers or our mother church as advice to avoid the Coronavirus locks us out (or in according to your point of view).

In the current climate we are seeing anxiety, panic, false news, despair, anger and fear. Today's New Testament reading reminds us of those wonderful values of God's kingdom so often seen in our mothers and in mother church down the ages that we would do well to follow: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love.

May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts as we worship together in these difficult times. God bless you all.

Rev'd John

*You are invited to spend a quiet time with these prayers,
readings and reflection.*

Prayers for the week

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.

[The Collect for Mothering Sunday]

God of healing and hope, in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit bring out the best not the worst in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other, and of the strength that comes from being one body in you. Through Christ our wounded healer. Amen.

[Revd Sam Wells; St Martins in the Field, London]

Scriptural Comfort

'Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand'
(Isaiah 41:10)

'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'
(Philippians 4:6,7)

This week's readings

The First Book of Samuel 1:20-end

²⁰ In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the Lord.' ²¹ The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, 'As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord, and remain there for ever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time.' ²³ Her husband Elkanah said to her, 'Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only—may the Lord establish his word.' So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴ When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, 'Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. ²⁷ For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is given to the Lord.' She left him there for the Lord.

Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-17

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.

The Gospel according to Luke 2:33-35

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

***As we do not know how long this situation will last it is important
that we look out for one another.***

Please let Revd John know of anyone who is ill or in distress.

***Or if you need prayer or spiritual support,
or are lonely and just need a short chat please phone.***

For other resources please visit the Church of England web site:

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources

For more information on St Martin's please visit our web site and Facebook page:

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