

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 30 March 2025 - Mothering Sunday

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Exodus 2.1-10 or 1 Samuel 1.20-28; Psalm 34.11-20 or Psalm 127.1-4; 2 Corinthians 1. 3-7 or Colossians 3.12-17; Luke 2.33-35 or John 19. 25b-27

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by the Revd Sarah Tan, Chaplain, HMP Littlehey**

### Homily for Luke 2:33-35

Today is Mothering Sunday. A day which has become about giving thanks for all that our mothers do for us. A day when younger children in particular try hard to be extra good or extra helpful and remember to say thank you for all the many things that their Mums do for them every day. It is also a day which is difficult for many people – those who have never been mothers but wanted to be, those whose mother has died, those who never knew their mum, those estranged from their families whether they are the child or the mother and many other difficult situations which make this day one that is hard and difficult not happy and bright.

God understands the difficulties as well as the joys we face in life. Jesus was fully human and fully divine, and he grew up in a typical family despite the fact he was far from typical! Simeon in the Gospel reading points to the greatness of the baby he has just held in his arms, the baby, the Son of God who has come to reconcile the whole of our broken and fallen humanity with God. A baby who would grow into a man who hung upon a cross so that we might have eternal life with God. I often wonder how Mary and Joseph felt when they were told things about their little boy. Did they believe what they were told? They knew that this child was no ordinary child (the many angels surrounding his birth had given that away) but did they understand quite who Jesus would grow up to be? Did Mary and Joseph think that people were just being a bit ridiculous and not daring to think that what they were told would come true.

We all face uncertainty in life whether it is as a parent watching a child grow and become independent and not knowing fully who that child will be by the time they are an adult. We face it too in choices we have, decisions to be made and probably in our relationship with God too. Believing faithfully without doubt or question is a difficult thing. Yet we are called into a relationship with God we are called to live as people who know that they will enjoy the liberty of eternal life and that means trusting to God in the hard times and the uncertain times. It means living knowing that God holds us when we are heartbroken just as much as when we are rejoicing, that God is with us when things are really difficult as well as when they are straightforward, mundane and boring.

Praying for the strength to face the difficult days when it feels as though our own hearts and souls are being pierced knowing that God is with us and praying for the strength to trust in that means that we can face whatever life has in store for us knowing that we are a child of God held and known and loved. It doesn't necessarily make difficult days easy, but it does mean that we can draw on the strength of the risen Christ whom Simeon held in his arms to hold us when we need it. It allows us to celebrate with real joy and to endure with real strength since Christ came for all people that they might know what it is to be loved and to be free.

If you find today a difficult day pray for God's strength to face it and pray that you have the courage to trust in God and allow God to carry you. For those who are celebrating or being celebrated today be extra grateful for the relationships you have and those who you love and who love you. Above all let us remember that we are each held and loved by God just as we are and let us be truly thankful for a love which knows no bounds.

Amen.

### **Homily for John 19:25b-27**

Today's Gospel reading redefines what we might imagine as family. We perhaps think of family as blood ties or legal ties of adoption but Jesus from the cross acknowledges the closeness of his mother Mary and of the disciple John and redefines that as family – mother and son.

Mothering Sunday can be a difficult day for lots of people. It can be a day which seems to push right into the limelight an ideal of a perfect relationship of mother and child or children which is always loving, kind, full of fun and patience and respect. Any of us who have had a relationship with any other human being will know that relationships however good and life giving are never always ideal. For people whose relationships with their own mother or their own child are difficult or strained today can feel perhaps more like one where all faults and failings are pointed out. There are those for whom today brings waves of grief for relationships lost or relationships which have never happened, and it can also be a day for celebrating our mothers and those we are mothers to.

Jesus is showing from the cross however that family is wider than blood ties or legal ties. Family and relationships are about love. They are about respecting one another; they are about being thankful for the relationships we do have whether they fit the traditional society labels or not. There is a famous saying 'It takes a village to raise a child'. That is not about biology but about love and care and shared responsibility.

As people of faith, we are called to take a share in the responsibility of loving people. We are called to do our bit to support one another through good times and difficult ones. We are asked to live out the love we know God has for us by loving others. Today is a day to give real thanks for those who meet our physical and practical needs but it also a day to give thanks for those who meet our emotional and spiritual needs and those whose needs we meet. As people of faith, we are all part of the household of God, we are all members of one family – the church, God's people on earth. People who live with openness and generosity and love for all no matter what the label we put on those relationships. Today we can give thanks for those we call mothers and those who are like mothers to us as well

as those for whom we are mothers or motherlike. We can give thanks for the gift of nurturing and supportive relationships, and we can pray anew for all those situations where relationships are strained, broken or not lifegiving.

In Christ we have a relationship with God which calls us to live as children of God. We are called to be people who know what it is to be loved and accepted and who share that love and acceptance in a broken world. We are all family with God, let us pray for the grace and courage to live that out.

Amen.

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt or I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ said \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

### ***Suggested intercessions***

Loving God,

We pray for you family on earth the church. We pray for Bishop Dagma, all who lead, preach, teach and serve you. We pray for unity where there is discord and the power of your Holy Spirit to come to renew your people in spirit and in truth to serve all the world with love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

We pray for your world. We pray for all those who find Mothering Sunday difficult, for all who find it a painful reminder of hopes unfulfilled, for those who feel overwhelmed by motherhood and all who support us in our families and friends in our daily lives. We pray for all those who feel alone and isolated and we ask for your church to be a place of welcome for everyone.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

We pray for the leaders of the nations, for those in power and authority that they would use it wisely for the good of all people. We hold before you the places of the world where there is war, conflict, natural disaster and injustice. We pray for a world where all are treated with dignity and value and wealth, and resources are stewarded wisely.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

We pray for all who are sick or suffering at this time. We pray for those in caring professions that they would be granted patience and compassion. We pray for those who are in pain or discomfort, those who are housebound, those who feel unable to face tomorrow. We pray for your peace and the comfort of your healing presence.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

We pray for all who have died and are now enjoying life with you. We pray for all who grieve especially today those who have recently lost a parent or a child. We pray for your peace and for your consolation to all who feel overwhelmed with grief, and we pray for us to know how to walk gently with those who find remembering hard.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

In a moment of quiet we pray for the things which are on our hearts today trusting in your unfailing love for each of us. *(leave a gap)*

Merciful father

Accept these prayer

For the sake of your Son  
Our saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

### ***Suggested hymns/songs***

Love divine all love's excelling  
The king of love my shepherd is  
Bind us together Lord  
Forth in the peace of Christ we go  
Father hear the prayer we offer  
We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord  
A new commandment  
Love is his word  
Thy hand O God has guided  
Brother sister let me serve you

### ***Activities to accompany the service***

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://reflectionary.org) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.com) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@ lectionary resource)