

A short service of prayer on Mothering Sunday

If there are more than one of you taking part, one person might like to lead the words in normal type, and the others respond with the bold.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our heavenly parent on this Mothering Sunday.

See what love the Father has given us;
**that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are.**



Saying sorry

As we gather our thoughts in these uncertain and worrying times, we bring before God the confusion of our feelings, our failure to love ourselves and others, as God loves and cares for us.

Silence for reflection

Your love gives us life, yet we fail to live as your children.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

You call us to serve others, yet often we serve only ourselves.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

You hear us when we cry for help, yet we ignore the cries of others.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Forgiveness

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in His image
to the praise and glory of His name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Responses

Under your wings you would hide us,
Mothering God.

Under your wings you would shelter us,
Mothering God.

Under your wings you would warm us,
Mothering God.

Under your wings you would nurture us,
Mothering God.

The Collect (special prayer for the day)

God of love,
Passionate and strong,
Tender and careful:
Watch over us and hold us all the days of our life;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Readings

New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 1: 3-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 33-35

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 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 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Needless to say, each day of this past week has felt as long as a year. Every day we have needed to process shattering announcements, and make unthinkable decisions about how we can best keep one another safe.

Our short Gospel today comes from the story of when Joseph and Mary take their little newborn to the Temple in Jerusalem, to say thank you to God for Him. The wise and elderly Simeon comes and holds the baby Jesus and tells them, with joy, that he has been waiting his whole life to see their child, who will bring light and salvation to the whole world. These words are what Jesus'

parents are already puzzling over, when Simeon then adds the strange prophecy that we have read today.

It would seem that the promise of this little boy's light and salvation for the nations is going to prove divisive. Too much for some people. That His light might indeed make things so bright that people's inward truths would have nowhere to hide, and that would feel threatening. And, says Simeon to these new parents, know that this rejection of your Son will painfully hurt your own hearts too.

Just as for Mary and Joseph, it is not just hard, but terrifying, when we know that we are unable to protect those we love from harm. All of us parent and care for other people, whether friends, neighbours or family members. All of us want one another to be kept safe, in love and light.

The comfort of our second reading, from Paul's letter to the slowly growing Christian community in Corinth is that we are always intended to share the difficulties and hopes of life together. That we do need one another. That we can only manage things together.

But, more than this. As people of faith, we are asked to share not just our physical resources with others, but our spiritual ones too. To share the truth of our afflictions and the comfort of our faith. Because God shares all His spiritual resources with us. In Jesus Christ, we can identify with the human fear and panic and darkness that He experienced in the days leading up to His crucifixion. In Jesus Christ, we can recognise the feeling of His heavenly parent's seeming abandonment ('My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'). In Jesus Christ, we don't need to hide how scared we really are.

And yet, in Jesus Christ, we can also know the hope of His resurrection, the comfort of His love and courage for the days to come. He shared with us His own assurance and trust in a Love that would never, ever fail Him.

This Mothering Sunday, in our shared affliction, let us rejoice too that 'our hope can be unshaken' because it is together, in love, that we share in God's overflowing consolation.

Words of faith

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers

Loving Lord,
Thank you for all those that we love and care for,
and for all those who love and care for us.
On this Mothering Sunday, we give you special thanks today for.....and ask
your blessing upon them.

We also thank you, with great joy and delight, for the safe arrival of Isla Mary
Ramsay (Chris & Ian's granddaughter) and Zara Rose Alison Swallow (Mick and
Jean Ward's granddaughter!) Bless them and their families we pray with
health, protection and peace, as they enjoy getting to know each other.

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.

We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,
and all who are working to discover the right medicines
to help those who are ill.

We pray for those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the Lord bless us and keep us.
May the Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious to us.
May the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us His
peace. **Amen**