



Morning Prayer
Mothering Sunday
14th March 2021

An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

14 March 2021

Mothersing Sunday

† Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Prayers of Penitence

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us

**and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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.

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
creator and redeemer of all;
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.
Now, through the deep waters of death,
you have brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
Blessed be God for ever.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

Amen.

¶ The Word of God

Psalmody

Psalm 127.1–4

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labour in vain.
- 2 Unless the Lord keeps the city,
the guard keeps watch in vain.
- 3 It is in vain that you hasten to rise up early
and go so late to rest, eating the bread of toil,
for he gives his beloved sleep.
- 4 Children are a heritage from the Lord
and the fruit of the womb is his gift.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Exodus 2.1–10

¹ Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶ When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' ⁸ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Old Testament Canticle

A Song of Humility

- 1 Come, let us return to the Lord
who has torn us and will heal us.
- 2 God has stricken us
and will bind up our wounds.
- 3 After two days, he will revive us,
and on the third day will raise us up,
that we may live in his presence.
- 4 Let us strive to know the Lord;
his appearing is as sure as the sunrise.
- 5 He will come to us like the showers,
like the spring rains that water the earth.
- 6 'O Ephraim, how shall I deal with you?
How shall I deal with you, O Judah?
- 7 'Your love for me is like the morning mist,
like the dew that goes early away.
- 8 'Therefore, I have hewn them by the prophets,
and my judgement goes forth as the light.
- 9 'For loyalty is my desire and not sacrifice,
and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.' *Hosea 6.1-6*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Second Reading

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.

²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead

And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on the earth.

And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light.**

Gospel Canticle

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.

- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Luke 1.68-79*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Sermon (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

The Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;**

he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.



Prayers

Let us pray for the Church and the world, cherished in the tender love of God.

As our Lord grew to manhood under a mother's care, may his Church be as a mother to her children ... Bless her ministers with the gift of compassion, to offer themselves in service to all who come to seek their help.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the world, that all its people may be as one family in harmony and peace ... Let motherly love be the desire and the ideal of all the human race ... Bless those in positions of power, that they may seek to serve and protect those under their authority.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Bless our homes with care and concern for one another ... May our families be as the Holy Family in shared love and worship ... Be ever close with the gift of your unfailing love to the mothers and children in our community.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Have mercy on the mothers who are in distress, those who have lost children through death or estrangement, those whose children are sick in body or mind ... Grant them strength in their affliction and healing for those they love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the departed who have known human love on earth and have passed into the divine love of heaven ... May they be in peace and joy with blessed Mary and all the saints.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray in the name of Christ, who loves us as a mother loves her children.

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

The Collect is said.

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 Lord's Prayer is said

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**



The Conclusion

The Blessing

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

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Mothering Sunday

By Bridgett Nicholls

THE Irish writer Colm Tóibín's bleak and painful short novel *The Testament of Mary* imagines the life that the mother of Jesus may have lived, in the household of the Beloved Disciple (identified as John) in Ephesus, after the crucifixion. It is an accomplished and original piece of literature, yet for many of its readers it offers a harsh challenge to everything they might most wish to hold to, in the picture of Mary standing faithfully with her dying son.

Tóibín's Mary is angry and resentful, particularly when she speaks of the men who visit periodically to ask about her memories. These scribes, who are perhaps the writers of the Gospels, are not interested in recording the facts as she tells them. They seek a different sort of ending, and a powerful degree of certainty; and it is their version of events which will be left for posterity. She has not only lost a son, but lost the right to tell his story.

This is not the way the Church has imagined the consequences of Jesus's last act. We read his words to Mary and "the disciple whom he loved" as an expression of love and concern that even physical agony cannot quench (John 19.26-27). Before he entrusts himself to his Father, he entrusts his mother and his beloved friend to one another. Some scholars, among them Rudolph Bultmann, have seen this as the institution of the Church. That idea is less in favour among contemporary commentators; and it is in any case questionable whether the action needs that kind of elaboration.

This was the Gospel reading that I had before me in a week when real human crises seemed to be all around. The mother who had recently lost an adult child was rushed into hospital, to be followed a few days later by her husband. Another friend was coming to terms with his mother's advancing dementia. Railway carriages were displaying appeals for donations to Age Concern, so that elderly people living alone could receive a call, and have some friendly contact once a week.

Turning to the Old Testament reading for Mothering Sunday, we find Moses, entrusted to a reed basket, found by Pharaoh's daughter, and returned to his mother until he had grown up (Exodus 2.1-10). The alternative choice is the story of Hannah, who gives up her little son to the Lord, and entrusts him to Eli in the Temple (1 Samuel 1.20-28).

All this has made me think about how, and to whom, we entrust those closest to us: parents in residential care; parents in other countries, who depend on the love and support of those who are not their flesh and blood; their migrant children who receive familial privileges in the homes of friends in their adopted countries; children cared for by others while their parents work; adopted children, and those in foster care. The list could be longer.

Entrusting carries great risks, and trust can be abused. Tóibín hints that it was. It can also produce extraordinary new futures. Moses became the leader of his people as they embarked on God's destiny for them. As a prophet, Samuel helped to shape a nation under a new system of kingship. Out of the affliction of slavery and oppression, and the pain of childlessness, God brought great events.

This week, the calendar is full of saints to brighten the middle of Lent: Patrick (17th March), Cyril of Jerusalem (18th), Joseph (19th), Cuthbert (20th) and Thomas Cranmer (21st). Four of the five, as bishops, held in trust part of God's Church; if Cranmer seems more fallible than the others, it is partly because his career lies within the firm grip of modern historical scholarship.

Joseph was entrusted with God's own Son. Falling in a week when we give thanks for our mothers, his feast day is a rare opportunity to keep a non-secular fathers' day.