

The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday) – 22nd March 2020

Collect

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.

Gospel: John 19.25b-27

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

Mary stands at the foot of the cross, and in his agony Jesus's thoughts are all for her. With great tenderness, he entrusts her to his beloved friend, John, telling them they are to be mother and son to one another. He must have seen how well they would understand each other – Mary and John, quiet, reflective thinkers who treasured and pondered deep things in their hearts. Surely the rich theology of John's Gospel must have its roots in the conversations between these two.

Jesus loves us, his followers, as he loved his mother. He cares for us with the same tenderness, understanding and compassion that he showed to Mary at the foot of the cross.

Julian of Norwich captures this quite beautifully in one of her Revelations. Jesus has appeared to her in a vision. 'With cheerful joy our good Lord looked down to his right and thereby brought to mind the place where our Lady was standing during his passion. He said 'Can you see in her how greatly you are loved? For love of you I made her so exalted, so noble, so worthy'.

So Mothering Sunday is a feast that belongs to all of us, whether or not we are mothers ourselves. It reminds us that we are loved by Christ as he loved his own mother. May that love surround you and comfort you in these difficult days.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

St Anne's Parish Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose love surrounds us all on every side, bless St Anne's parish church and all who worship there. Give us a vision of all we are called to be, courage to reach out to those around us and the spirit of love to unite all our efforts. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.