

**The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale
Morning Prayer
Sunday 14th March 2021
Lent IV | Mothering Sunday**

Hymn

[Requested by Jean Downing in memory of her husband]

**I watch the sunrise lighting the sky,
Casting its shadows near.
And on this morning bright though it be,
I feel those shadows near me.**

**But you are always close to me
Following all my ways.
May I be always close to you
Following all your ways, Lord.**

**I watch the sunlight shine through the clouds,
Warming the earth below.
And at the mid-day, life seems to say:
I feel your brightness near me.**

But you are always...

**I watch the sunset fading away,
Lighting the clouds with sleep.
And as the evening closes its eyes,
I feel your presence near me.**

But you are always...

**I watch the moonlight guarding the night,
Waiting till morning comes.
The air is silent, earth is at rest
Only your peace is near me.**

But you are always...

The Collect

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 our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

First Reading

(Exodus 2.1-10)

A reading from the Book of Exodus
A man from the house of Levi married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. 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. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. 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. 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. 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?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. 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. 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.

Responsorial Psalm

(34.11-20)

R/ O taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

Come, my children, and listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is there who delights in life and longs for days to enjoy good things? **R/**

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from lying words. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. **R/**

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to root out the remembrance of them from the earth. **R/**

The righteous cry and the Lord hears them and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken hearted and will save those who are crushed in spirit. **R/**

Many are the troubles of the righteous; from them all will the Lord deliver them. He keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken. **R/**

Second Reading

(Colossians 3.12-17)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians
As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 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. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you

were called in the one body. And be thankful. 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. 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.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel (John.19.25b-27)

**Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
you are one with us, Mary's Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin
pouring your love and goodness in.
Jesus our love for you we sing, Living Lord.**

**Lord Jesus Christ now and every day
teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance Lord of you
into our lives your power breaks through,
Living Lord.**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Listen to the gospel of Christ according to St John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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

**Lord Jesus Christ you have come to us
born as one of us, Mary's Son.
Led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free,
Living Lord Jesus help us see, you are Lord.**

**Lord Jesus Christ I would come to you
live my life for you, Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
your many gifts will make me new,
into my life your power breaks through,
Living Lord .**

The Homily **Bishop June**

Hello, and welcome to this reflection for Sunday, the 14th of March. It's a day which has very many different names attached to it. It's the fourth Sunday in Lent,

which means it's roughly halfway between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day. We're halfway through our Lenten journey. And that's why it's also called Refreshment Sunday. If you've given something up for this Lent or you're following a rigorous regime, then this is your opportunity to have a break, you can officially take a break on this day.

Through many centuries, the Church has also called it Mothering Sunday, recognising the habit people had of returning to their 'mother church' on this day, the place where they'd been baptised and which had nurtured their faith. Often those in domestic service returned to their home communities on this day. In more modern times, of course, for about the last 100 years, we've come to know it as Mothers' Day. Well, there's never been breakfast in bed for this mother on the fourth Sunday in Lent. But like most families, we enjoy remembering the mothers of every generation on this day. And the church recognises that in the readings that it sets for the day.

There's the story at the beginning of one Samuel chapter 1, verses 20 to 28. Hannah has waited long for a child. And like many women who found it hard to conceive she has a sense that her son Samuel is extra special. "For this child I prayed." Therefore, as long as he lives, he is given to the Lord. And then in John's gospel, chapter 19, verses 25 to 27, another story of motherhood, this time at the scene of Jesus's dying. So it's the parting between him and his mother. Mary also gives her son back to God. But this time, it's in grief and sorrow. Both these passages speak about the relationships of a mother and her children, what we know to be one of the most enduring forms of love.

As we have endured these long months of lockdown, and all the inhibitions that it's brought, it has surely been the loves in our life, which have helped us survive. And the separations from the people we love, which has caused us most pain. That mixture of the beauty and pain of love is at the heart of Ian McEwan's novel called "Enduring Love". I remember it vividly because it begins with a dramatic accident. But the cleverness of the novel lies in that phrase 'enduring love', and how it brings together two realities which we know so well. One is that love asks a lot of us. Part of the novel is about distorted, obsessive love, and the pain of distrust and suspicion. How do we endure love and the hardship it asks of us, such as Mary had to endure in watching her son Jesus fulfill his destiny, through suffering? But the other meaning of enduring love is about love which lasts. The novel opens with the scene of a couple, Joe and Clarissa, having a picnic celebrating the length and comforts of their relationship. Until that is, this accident and all its consequences take their toll on them. We know especially on this day, when we give thanks for mother love that love is what sustains us. But it is also

capable of being complex and demanding and sometimes fragile.

In our times of need and endurance we return not just to human love, but to how God's love is poured into our hearts. Whatever we endure we still have hope. That hope is not in vain for the promise is that God's love is ever present. It is generously, daily, reliably made available to us, asking us in turn, to be faithful in our habits of love. When life is hard, when we feel lost, or we do something shameful, when we can't see the way ahead, or we're frightened by what's happening to us, the love of God still gets poured into our hearts, often through the people who will not let us go.

What do I feel about being a mother? A very strong sense for me, is that I always hope my children will know which way to turn if they get into trouble, or if their life feels as if it's falling apart. I hope that the love at home is the place our children will return when they need help, when they need to know that God's love is a place of home for them as well.

My closing illustration this week, is one of enduring love. It's not a famous person, but of a family, a family I know in the diocese, who are going through a terrifying time just now. The young mum in the family who has small children is almost certainly dying. This news has come upon them suddenly, and it feels like a complete upending of what ought to be. We might expect that the elderly grandparents of the family are coming towards the end of their life. But surely not a young mother? But it is her parents, who despite their grief and panic, are pouring out their practical love. It's they who are showing God's love poured into everyone's hearts in this tragic situation. They're travelling this rocky road with 'mother love'. The love which freely gives itself, which knows no bounds, and so shows that hope is not in vain.

I said this day, the fourth Sunday of Lent, has lots of different names. It's also called Laetare Sunday, laetare being the Latin word for rejoice, which begins some of the biblical passages associated with it. In the worship offered on this day, psalms and readings start with that invitation to us to rejoice whatever this day holds for you. May you know the gift of love in your life. May you practice the habit of loving and so may you rejoice in the love God has for you and which he so badly wants to pour into your heart. Amen.

Hymn [*Requested by Ann Bryant*]

**O perfect Love, all human thought transcending
Lowly we kneel in prayer before thy throne
That theirs may be the love which knows no ending
Whom thou forevermore dost join in one.**

**O perfect Life, be thou their full assurance
Of tender charity and steadfast faith
Of patient hope and quiet, brave endurance
With childlike trust that fears nor pain, nor death.**

**Grant them the joy which brightens earthly sorrow
Grant them the peace which calms all earthly strife
And to life's day the glorious unknown morrow
That dawns upon eternal love and life.**

The Intercessions

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

We give thanks for the example of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and pray that our spiritual mother, the Church, may follow her in humility, trust and love. We remember especially, Bishops June and Karin, and in our cycle of prayer with the parish of Lagunda we give thanks for the beautiful countryside in which we are lucky to live and pray that we may be wise stewards of the natural resources we are blessed with.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world, that all people may be as one family in peace and harmony. Bless those in positions of power, that they may seek to serve and protect those in their care.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless our homes and families, and especially those who have shown us maternal love and care. May our families follow the example of the Holy Family in mutual love and united in worship.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Have mercy on those who suffer through sickness and distress. Among the sick we remember... We pray too especially today for mothers who struggle to care for their children or who have known the loss of a child, may the prayers of Mary who knew such sorrows be a source of solace to them.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In a time of stillness we offer our personal needs and concerns to our heavenly Father... ..We make these prayers through Christ, the Saviour of the world.

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

Hymn

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might,
the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age to same;
his holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!**

Prayers for the sick this week:

Elizabeth Thomas	Betty Hicks
Kath Loughor	Colin Bailey
Eunice Wood	Sophie Sabit
Catherine Brynach	Helen
Margaret Price	Kevin Hurst
Pat Evans	Orla Elizabeth O'Grady
Brendan	Lorna Powell
Wendy Taylor	Barbara Goodway
Mollie Nottage	Ian Dixon
Prince Philip – the Duke of Edinburgh	

Prayers for the recently departed:

Roy Williams	Mary Wines
Bethan (the daughter of Mike and Wendy Jones)	

Mothering Sunday Family Worship

Today we are hosting a Family Worship at 4pm on Zoom. The link will be shared in the usual way but also via our church schools. Please look out for the link and join us.

Hymn Requests

If you have any hymn requests for our Zoom worship, please send them to one of the clergy team.

Bible Study Group

Our next Bible study is on Wednesday 17th March at 6-7pm, please email Rev Angela for the link.

Children's Saturday Club

Children's club on Zoom every Saturday at 10am during term time. If you would like to join want to join, please email Rev Angela at angelacooper03@gmail.com

Lent Charity

Our Lent Charity this year is Huggard, the Cardiff Homeless Shelter. A list of these items is available. Items will be collected across the East Vale on the week beginning 22nd of March. People may prefer to give a cash donation.