

Sunday 15 March – Mothering Sunday

Prayers

Gracious Father, on this Mothering Sunday we give thanks for the unique privilege of having children to bring up. We feel so unprepared; we feel such a responsibility; we often feel so overwhelmed, even when our children are fully grown and have their own children. Help us to rest in the knowledge that we could be asked to do no more important thing than to love, guide and nurture a new life. In doing this we're sharing in your divine activity of loving, guiding and nurturing the whole human race. And so we pray with Mary: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

We pray for mothers everywhere:

- Young others overawed by the task, and by the depth of their feelings;
- Older mothers thrilled beyond measure that at last a child has come;
- Mothers who are single, scared and poor, mothers whose diet is thin and whose milk is scarce

Hasten the day when mothers everywhere can say with Mary, 'The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.'

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

We pray for fathers everywhere:

- Young fathers, unsure how to be a father and a husband, a lover and a friend;
- Fathers wondering how to feed another child;
- Fathers working long hours leaving home too early and coming home too late to share these special years.

Hasten the day when fathers everywhere can say, 'His mercy is for those who fear him, from generation to generation.'

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

We pray for couples everywhere who are without children:

- Those who have made the choice and are happy or who have reached a place of peace that it has not happened for them;

- Those who are desperate for a child, maybe seeking help and waiting anxiously, month by month;
- Those who are trying to adopt and going through a long process.

Hasten the day when all who want children can say, 'He has shown strength with his arm, and lifted up the lowly.'

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

We pray for the family lives of the nation, upon which so much depends. We know that good experience of family life leads to good family life in the next generation. We pray for families torn apart by fighting and war, thinking especially of those in the Middle East and in Ukraine. Be among us to bless, guide and keep safe all families and continue to teach us the way of Jesus, who knew the security of a loving home with Mary and Joseph in Nazareth. So may we all come to say with Mary, 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Lord, we lift up to you families troubled by illness of body, mind or spirit. Give them strength in their difficulties and your healing and comfort. We bring before you especially today Jericho Hasieber, Sarah, Sue Copsey, David Richards, Joanne Fearis, Brian Southwood and in a moment of quiet all those who are on our hearts today.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your gift of eternal life for all who recognise you as Lord. We bring to you today all those mourning the loss of a loved one at this time, praying especially for the family and friends of June Taylor, Joan Plester, Margaret Arrowsmith. From our memorial book we remember and give thanks for the lives of Roy Francis Malyan, Sylvia Hogben, Edna Millyard and Steven Carlile. So may we all come to say with Mary, 'He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.'

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

So, Father, receive our prayers and bless our best efforts, which we offer in Jesus' name.

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