

Mothers' Union Liturgy for Mothering Sunday 2024

Theme: Nurturing Hope in a Hurting World

The Gathering

Please stand as the ministers enter the church. A minister greets the people with these words:

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

Welcome

Specific words of welcome to the community can be said here by the president or minister.

Traditionally today is a time to celebrate our mother churches, those people and places which have nurtured our faith. But for many this time comes with painful associations with motherhood, feelings of inadequacy or loss. Yet in Christ, we are given both comfort and family.

We have come together today to give thanks to God for all those people who have nurtured us, and to offer ourselves to nurture others, with God's help. We have also come to acknowledge the pain of a hurting world, where we have failed to nurture each other.

We come to receive again from the God of compassion and mercy.

Prayer of Preparation

Loving, compassionate Father,
As a mother hen gathers her chicks,
so you draw the whole human family to yourself.
Bring us together now, Lord,
that we may today and forever be united under your wing
in all our sorrows and joys.
All Amen.

Hymn or song maybe be sung here

The Comfortable Words

Hear the words of comfort our Saviour Christ says
to all who truly turn to him:
Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11.28

Silence for Reflection

Prayer of Penitence

Come let us return to the Lord and say:

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All Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution

The president says

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*,
pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,
confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,
and keep *you* in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

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.

All Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

New Testament Reading

2 Corinthians 1.3-7

The following introduction to the reading may be said

Reader: Paul describes the Christian community as one where we nurture each other in good times and bad.

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.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2.33-35

The following introduction to the reading may be said

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Reader: Mary is warned of the cost of motherhood.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Ideas for talks and sermons

We have suggested three questions that could be used as starters for sermons and reflections that link in with the readings.

- How is Mary's story expressive of the brokenness we face in today's world and how is her pain consoled?
- What does family look like to God? (Concerning Mary, who had to allow her son to leave her in a painful way.)
- What nurtures you and brings you hope? Christ has given us abundant consolation, so how can we bring consolation to a hurting world? (Links with the New Testament reading.)

Response action/activity

You may like to invite people to write prayers of thanks for those who have nurtured them and to identify places where God's nurturing love is needed.

The Creed

Let us declare our faith in God.

All 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 of Intercession

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Father of mercy
and God of all consolation,
turn your gaze towards us as
we humbly lift our prayers
to you saying:

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

We praise and glorify you
for your steadfast love and
the nurture of all your children.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

We thank you for the body
of your Church and we pray
you will teach us how to console
and cherish each other as
followers of your beloved Son.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

May the voices of all Christians
be united as one voice,
proclaiming a message of
love and hope.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

May your Spirit of Truth
enrich our Bible reading and prayer
with the light of your wisdom.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.
May the circle of your love
close around those whose
relationships are broken
and in need of your healing.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

May the light of Christ
shine into the darkness
of injustice and suffering.

Abide in our hearts

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All Show us your love.

Teach us to hold pain
with the compassion
and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

May the faithful departed
know the fulfilment of their hope
as you receive them into your Kingdom
to live with you forever and ever.

Abide in our hearts
All Show us your love.

May you fill our hearts with the assurance
that our prayers will rise up to you as a
fragrant offering and be pleasing to you.

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace

Offertory

Hymn or song may be sung here

Eucharistic Prayer D

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

(or)

The Lord is here.

All His Spirit is with us.

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Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Almighty God, good Father to us all,
your face is turned towards your world.
In love you gave us Jesus your Son
to rescue us from sin and death.
Your Word goes out to call us home
to the city where angels sing your praise.
We join with them in heaven's song:

All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.]

Father of all, we give you thanks
for every gift that comes from heaven.
To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
With signs of faith and words of hope
he touched untouchables with love and washed the guilty clean.

This is his story.

All This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

The crowds came out to see your Son,
yet at the end they turned on him.
On the night he was betrayed
he came to table with his friends
to celebrate the freedom of your people.

This is his story.

All This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup, gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.
This is our story.

All This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

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Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate the cross
on which he died to set us free.
Defying death he rose again
and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

This is our story.

All This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

Send your Spirit on us now
that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
with opened eyes and hearts on fire.
May we and all who share this food
offer ourselves to live for you
and be welcomed at your feast in heaven
where all creation worships you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

All Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All 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.

Breaking of the Bread

The President breaks the consecrated bread

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ

All Though we are many, we are one body
because we all share in the on bread.

The Agnus Dei may be used as the bread is broken

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All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

Giving of Communion

The president invites the people to communion;

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.

All Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The president and people receive communion.

During the distribution of communion appropriate music could be playing or songs sung.

Prayers after Communion

Silence is kept.

The Post Communion or another suitable prayer is said.

All may say one of these prayers

All Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast
you feed us in this sacrament
with the food and drink of eternal life:
help us who have tasted your goodness
to grow in grace within the household of faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(or)

All Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Dismissal

Notices – congregation to sit as any notices are read out.

A hymn may be sung.

A posy of flowers (or another suitable gift) may be handed out here to all the ‘mothers’, carers and nurturers (be generous in giving these terms its widest possible interpretation). You may like to give out sunflower seeds alongside the posy to take home and nurture into flowers.

Encourage people to reflect on those who have nurtured them, and those to whom they may be able to bring comfort.

Blessing

Great God, you are one God,
and you bring together what is scattered
and mend what is broken.

Unite us with the scattered peoples of the earth
that we may be one family of your children.

Bind up all our wounds
and heal us in spirit,
that we may be renewed as disciples of Jesus Christ,
our Master and Saviour.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

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This service has been prepared by St Mellitus College, working with Mothers' Union.