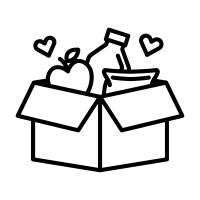


**Reflection August 2023**

My dear friends, what a changing world we live in, particularly in weather terms. Last month after the beautiful warmth of June we found ourselves once again plunged into torrential rain with flooding and disruption to travel, not only in the UK but other countries throughout the world. Now that we are into August a time when many families try to take a break, we find airports having trouble as staff threaten to or even go on strike and motorways are crowded making it difficult to reach our destination. I do hope that if you are looking forward to a visit from your family that their journey will be safe and smooth. Sheran, our Worldwide President has been and continues to travel to visit members overseas and here in the UK and Ireland, so as well as prayers which are needed for our friends and family please pray for safe travels for Sheran and all members of MU staff and Trustees, who are being our eyes and ears around the world. These visits are so important because, especially in the UK and Ireland, membership is slow to return to former pandemic numbers and that makes it harder for the rest of us to complete all the work we would like to do to help all who rely on the knitting, sewing, toiletries and particularly food items we give to those who find themselves without the essentials, which most of us take for granted. I know in my part of the world foodbanks are struggling with empty shelves and families who rely on school meals to help feed their children are finding it particularly hard now that school holidays are here. When I began thinking about this my thoughts turned to the feeding of the five thousand. This story can be found in all the Gospels which I think shows its importance. In Matthews account the disciples were concerned because it was getting late in the day and a large crowd had gathered and needed feeding. As usual the disciples turned to Jesus for a solution, but Jesus turned the tables back on them and suggested they deal with the problem.

They are able to identify five loaves and two fish which was just enough to feed one person and had been brought to do simply that. However, after prayer, Jesus, with the disciples’ help is able to satisfy the hunger of all 5,000 present and no one goes away hungry. These people were physically hungry but many need feeding spiritually and in the Gospel of St Matthew, chapter 9: 35-38 we read that Jesus had pity for the people because there was much work to do and very few people to carry it out. There is much work for us to do as MU members both physical and spiritual. We may not all be able to do the work physically but we can speak to people about the love of God and once again, with the power of prayer everything is possible, so with that in mind let us bring to the foot of the cross, all the work which needs doing, asking God our Father to show us how we can help, even if we are unable to leave our homes. The rain may come down, the sun may shine, our journey may be difficult, but with God nothing is impossible. I hope you have a sunny August, enjoying life to the full, and thank you for your prayers.

Love Jenny

**Let us Pray**

Father God, who has bound us together in this bundle of life, give us grace to understand how our lives depend on the courage, industry, honesty and integrity of each other. May we be mindful of the needs of others, grateful for the faithfulness one to another, and faithful to our responsibilities to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Father, we pray for the flourishing of the Mothers’ Union. Help us not only to grow in number but in faith. Help us to remember the purpose, aim and objects we agreed to as we became members and strengthen us to be your workers in the field. In Jesus name. Amen

**Mary Sumners personal prayer**

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen

