



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2022

### Walking through Lent

How often do you fail Lent? We see it all when we look with an honest inward eye and see the evasions, the blames, the poor, neglected me. And how often redeemed when we make that small step towards that other person. We all LONG for God to be with us and release us from the burden of our very selves. We LONG to soothe our soul. Remember how wonderful it was to soothe your feet in a pool or that drink when coming in from the garden. Lent can move us and shake us – just keep walking!

*As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. Psalm 42:1*

As we pray for the Anglican Church in Ontario Canada, let us pray for those observing Lent with a study Eco-Anxiety and biblical wisdom: torn between grief and hope. And give thanks for the presence of Mothers' Union in this vast diocese.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 10 APRIL 2022

### Holy Week

Everything about Holy Week is counter-intuitive, especially the opening scene – the King on the donkey. This isn't cute, or endearing, it's cultural dynamite – no less so today than 2 millennia ago. Who among us lives humbly – on purpose? Even spiritual pilgrimage is touted by the travel agent. The Prayer Book sets out each of the Passion narratives to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest. It can be too much. But we need some gutsy reality. Even those in our land who have been swamped by mighty waters or fires or loss of work or friends or dignity, can be awakened through those Holy Week events. Jesus bears the unfairness, injustice and betrayal, the pain, the abandonment, the spite that besets all us. The King on the Donkey/the Fool on the Hill. Our God turns all our loves and hates inside out and up-side down.

*“Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Matthew 21:5*

Let us pray for our neighbours in Papua New Guinea as they suffer the ravages of Covid. Mothers' Union is very active, campaigning against gender-based violence and working for improved literacy and wider health programmes.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 17 APRIL 2022

### Resurrection

You may be thinking of the three-tiered universe sometimes framed as the saints on earth, the saints expectant and the saints triumphant. Sounds a bit like our education system where you go from one stage to the next and then the next. It seems that Jesus's ministry on earth tipped that whole idea of graded development on its head. All sorts of failures 'passed' his discipleship test. His resurrection shattered the concept of life on earth being the ultimate experience. Whatever and wherever 'new birth' will be, our hope is ALIVE and that transforms us here and now and forever.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3*

Bringing living hope to prisoners, teenage parents and those living alone is just some of the ministry of Mothers' Union members in the diocese of Manchester UK. Let our prayers assist them all, as both those ministering and ministered to and brought to new life.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 24 APRIL 2022

### New life in Christ

Same old, same old. Isn't that the way we feel when there's yet another family crisis or that old, nagging self-doubt worms its way into our subconscious. It may be that we still hold onto a mantra or a belief that, although it has brought us 'well-earned respect', may even have left others with little or no love or respect. If we are 'in Christ' then our new created self needs to be open to honest scrutiny. St Paul recognized that Jesus' life, death and resurrection brought about a seismic shift in the conception of 'being human'. Christianity is the tectonic plate which rides the social and cultural movement of human society, drawing to itself the lost, the outcast, the disempowered – those grateful to be renewed and loved.

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 2 Corinthians 5:17*

There is a great desire to make things 'new' in Ghana and members of Mothers' Union campaign for a safer and better world for women and girls with #endgbv and #endstigma. May the gospel message of dignity and safety empowered our sisters in Ghana.



## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

SUNDAY 1 MAY 2022

### Peace Makers

In order to make peace we need to be at peace – with God, with ourselves and with our neighbours. That’s an almost insurmountable task when assailed by an aggressor – from Putin to the envious colleague, the situation calls for a greater righteousness. This is a term that applies to The Sermon on the Mount, because with every phrase the Old Dispensation, the Judaic Law, is challenged. Just when you thought you had all the boxes ticked, Jesus says, “But wait, there’s more...”. Yes, more generosity, more forgiveness, more trust in God. And the hardest on these is trust because at the root of our resistance to trust is fear.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9*

We pray for the diocese of Tuam, Killala & Achonry in Northern Ireland. The Sacred Path is the diocesan Centre for Spirituality offers ‘stepping stones’ those who would grow as children of God. Let us thank God for those who support and attend. May they grow in peace and trust.



## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

SUNDAY 8 MAY 2022

### Reconciliation

If you were thinking just how terribly difficult reconciliation is, you are in good company. CS Lewis wrote that ‘The problem of reconciling human suffering with the existence of a God who loves, is only insoluble so long as we attach a trivial meaning to the word “love.”’ Any move towards reconciliation needs to be ‘fuelled’ by loving the person who does us wrong. And that is so hard, so counter-intuitive. When we have been knocked down, ignored, wounded without cause, it doesn’t seem fair to leave ourselves vulnerable yet again by loving ‘them’. Yet we are followers of the innocent one who forgave his enemies. It’s a lonely place to be, in a world that demands revenge but calls it justice.

*Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:31-32*

As we acknowledge the work of Mothers’ Union in Waikato and Taranaki in New Zealand, let us thank God for their aims that ‘By supporting marriage and family life, especially through times of adversity, we tackle the most urgent needs challenging relationships and communities’ and join them in prayer.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 15 MAY 2022

### Security and shelter

Is security and shelter an unreal expectation, a dream, an illusion? It is absolutely what any human being would want: to sleep, to shop, to work without threat of attack by other humans, or the elements, or famine or plague. The biblical Creation narratives present a most wonderful theology (the word mean an idea of God); that God's creation is Good. Adam walks in the Garden of Eden peacefully chatting with God and content with the responsibility of taking care of what God has made. BUT the narrative goes on to so rightly describe the disruption humans have on this Creation. And throughout history men and women have lived in peace and war. But also in the torment of their own fears and in safety under shelter of the Most High.

*You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." Psalm 91: 1-2*

This week, let us offer our prayers for peace in South Africa. We give thanks for the witness of Mothers' Union in Grahamstown. As many members gathered for worship on Lady Day, and rejoiced the shelter of the Most High, we pray they find peace in their hearts and lives.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 22 MAY 2022

### Conflict resolution

Blessed are those who resist the temptations of power, who refuse to gather it to themselves,  
Blessed are the little ones who find new courage to claim and inhabit their own.  
Blessed are those who absorb others' hurts, who refuse to give back in like manner.  
Blessed are those who keep in touch with their enemies, who refuse to let them go.

Praise to the God who overcomes all divisions, who bears the pain of our healing.

Psalm 149 in *Out of the Silence ... Into the Silence* by Jim Cotter. Cairns Publications, Harlech, 2006. Pp440-441. Used with permission.

*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 2 Corinthians 5: 18-19*

Mothers' Union in the diocese of Rockhampton is committed to promoting 'stable family life', the protection of children and to helping to those in adversity: may members find courage for their ministry and unity in purpose and love to heal any divisions.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 29 MAY 2022

Combatting violence against women across provinces

An Australian woman jailed for killing her husband said she had not heard of domestic violence and that what she experienced she thought was normal. She described being made to eat her food off the floor, like the dogs, this being the most benign of her degradations. To hold a mirror of Christian love against such brutality is to shine a light of exquisite riches. How can we not hold back from plugging the depths of our culture and our Christian teachings to raise the awareness of all human beings to the danger of gender-based superiority. The humiliation and subservience of any other human being to oneself is biblically unjust. It is violence against one created in the image and likeness of God.

*a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. Isaiah 42:3*

MU is planning a two year project across the dioceses of Uganda, Kenya and Southern Africa working within the Church and rural communities to combat GBV. As well as raising awareness Mu hope to support survivors and include perpetrators in the discussion. Our prayers are asked for increased knowledge and training and opportunities for women.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 5 JUNE 2022

Gifts of the Spirit

We really love to be assured of our 'status'. This is the impetus to mark off our accomplishments (or sins) against a list – Yes to generosity, No to gossip. But St Paul truly understood God's generosity, he wrote that everyone gets their share and he understood God's wisdom, that the gifts are not for our benefit (spiritual or otherwise) but for the good of everyone. Mary Sumner wasn't making a list or appraising her status when she prayed, but simply acknowledging the power of the Spirit and her role as its vessel.

**All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for Thee; and every live I touch, do Thou by Thy Spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen.**

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7*

A variety of gifts are working in Mothers' Union in Tanzania. In 2022 it is extending to the already successful Credit & Savings group by working in partnership with Tearfund to help realise the Anglican Church of Tanzania's vision of spiritual and socio-economic transformation across the country. Thanks be to God.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 12 JUNE 2022

### Fruit of the Spirit

Here is another list! Oh no! Will I ever be good enough? But I did hold back from criticising the president/neighbour/minister even though I knew I was right. Oh fantastic, I can tick that one off! I went to all the Lenten studies this year and know SO much more. And Yes, to self-control! I didn't splurge on birthday presents this year. Well, everybody's got too much nowadays anyway and I often don't get presents from them. Godliness isn't just about going to church. I know it's next to cleanliness so I'm getting closer. I'm not really sure about mutual affection. There are some people who go out of their way to be difficult so it wouldn't be mutual then would it? And love, it's definitely very difficult to love those who won't make an effort. They say God is love but what about all the disasters and the state of the world nowadays.

Please answer as honestly as you can and give yourself a mark out of 7.

*For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. 2 Peter 1:5-7*

Let us pray for our neighbours in Papua New Guinea as they face increasing poverty with which comes increasing domestic violence. Communication is scarce but we pray Mothers' Union members will assist those affected by the pandemic and homelessness. May the gifts of the Spirit work in them.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2022

### Building God's Kingdom

It is a human desire to build and plant, to see results for our labour, to shield ourselves from the elements, to make provision for our sustenance. So we then begin to see ourselves as the makers and shakers, the carvers of our destiny thus proving our worth, the holders of knowledge – as the Beatles sang: "We are the Champions". The Pharisees wanted to be in the know. They were The Champions and wanted to be the first to know the Next Big Thing. Well, don't we all feel like that sometimes and Jesus, God's Word in Flesh and Spirit, says to us, "No, my dear ones, the Kingdom can only be built in your hearts. My kingdom is built on love of neighbour. My kingdom is for you and those who recognise it in you".

*Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.” Luke 17:20-21*

We pray for Mothers’ Union members in the diocese of Rejaf South Sudan. Although 76 MU leaders from 30 countries met together in Rwanda in 2019 to set the future directions, there is no up-to-date information. We trust that God’s Kingdom in Rejaf is enriched by our prayers.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2022

### The Church

Our First Nations people speak of Sacred Sites and Sacred Knowledge, of Country, of Family and Tribe. What familiar notions these are, especially to an Anglo-Celtic Christian inheritance that is common to most Australian Anglicans. Let us relax and be proud of what that inheritance has, and can, teach us. To love the places that have been prayed in, where the Body of Christ, the servants of God, meet to pray, to experience the presence of God in Word and Sacrament, to grow in love and mercy. We are Body of Christ, brothers and sisters, lovers of God’s created world. We are Church. It is as the old hymn begins We love the place, O God, wherein thine honour dwells and ends Lord Jesus, give us grace on earth to love thee more, in heaven to see thy face, and with thy saints adore.

*Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. Acts 20: 28*

Mothers’ Union in Leicester UK offers us a meditation on relationships which are, when in Christ, a microcosm of what our church life can be. *The influence that mothers, grandmothers and sisters have on their families often goes unnoticed and yet it is of enormous value. May families around the world see more clearly how they benefit from the love of these women, given so freely.*