



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 30 MARCH 2025 – Mothering Sunday

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 your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 34.11-20

11 Come, my children, and listen to me; ♦
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
12 Who is there who delights in life ♦
and longs for days to enjoy good things?
13 Keep your tongue from evil ♦
and your lips from lying words.
14 Turn from evil and do good; ♦
seek peace and pursue it.
15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous ♦
and his ears are open to their cry.
16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, ♦
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
17 The righteous cry and the Lord hears them ♦
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted ♦
and will save those who are crushed in spirit.
19 Many are the troubles of the righteous; ♦
from them all will the Lord deliver them.
20 He keeps all their bones, ♦
so that not one of them is broken.

A reading from the letter to Colossians, chapter 3, verses 12-17.

Colossians 3.12-17

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.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 2, verses 33-35.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord,
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, Chapter 2, verses 33-35.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 2.33-35

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.'

A Reflection from Hannah...

As you've probably noticed in eight years of life together, Mothering Sunday gets me up on my high-horse! Even in that first sentence there is a clue- woe betide anyone who dares call it 'Mother's Day' in my presence... that's the first issue and yes, correctly naming it 'Mothering Sunday' is a hill I'm prepared to die on! Then there's the commercial racket- all the ways in which we are convinced to buy things unnecessarily, all the waste, all the price-hiking. And finally, there's the insensitivity and pain of focusing on mothers only. Mothering Sunday is about *all* our mothering- the 'mothering' of the Church in nurturing us as disciples, and the mothering of one another that we can all practice, whatever our age or gender.

Usually, I reach into the past for comfort, and speak about how Mothering Sunday began as an invitation for young people who had moved to the cities to find work, to return home, to the community that brought them up and taught them the faith. So, imagine my surprise when I read this in *Kilvert's Diary* this week- a diary of a Victorian clergyman:

'Mothering Sunday, 19 March 1871

And all the country in an upturn going out visiting. Girls and boys going home to see their mothers and taking them cakes, brothers and sisters of middle age going to see each other.'

It's rather humbling to notice that this looks rather more like today's marking of Mothering Sunday, than my imagined past of returning to one's childhood church!

Perhaps it's more helpful to find the diamonds in the dust- the ways in which our culture still affirms something of the Gospel on a day like this one. In Kilvert's entry, it's easy to see the marks of love- taking a gift, spending time with family members. And we still do that on this day. Really, when all the nonsense is peeled back, that's what we're actually celebrating- love amongst us. Our reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians tells us what wearing love looks like- what do we 'put on', when we decide to follow Christ and prayerfully seek to imitate him in all that we do? Well, the answers are there in the text- compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, gratitude and love. These are the garments of our faith, and it's a daily choice to wear them. It is thought that this little passage from Colossians may be an early baptism text, and in those ancient days people would be baptised naked, and then come out of the water to be given a new white robe- a visual metaphor for this huge commitment.

And of course, words like compassion, kindness and love can sound so warm and happy. But we're mistaken if we think that they are easy ways to live. As our Gospel reading reminds us, love is costly. Love risks pain and agony. Love pierces our souls- just as Mary was foretold that day, love, in this world where we can choose other ways, requires grit and may take us to places we would never choose to go. And that, in all our lives, is what we give thanks for on Mothering Sunday- for those who walk with us in the ways of love, faith and nurture, come what may.