

## Collect and Readings for Worship at Home

Sunday 10th March 🌸 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

**Amen**

### Readings:

#### **First Reading: Exodus 2:1-10 : Birth and Youth of Moses**

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

#### **Gospel: John 19:25b-27**

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

## Reflection:

*“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.”*

Such a short Gospel reading today, and so much to consider within it.

The phrase above, uttered by Jesus in his dying hours are echoes of phrases we heard earlier from Pilate, “here is the man” and “here is your king” (19:5, 14). Pilate used such wording to mock and abuse both Jesus and the Jewish crowds but here, in contrast, with similar words Jesus is creating a new loving community. John places the declaration about this new family specifically, and significantly, at the cross. In obedience, we are told that the disciples whom Jesus loved, takes in his mother ‘from that hour’. The new community, from that hour, can exist only because of “that hour,” the hour of the cross which in John’s Gospel is also the hour of Jesus’ glorification. What is happening at the cross is new creation.

The creation of a new community, a new family, it always requires someone to start it and usually someone to lead it-certainly in the first instance. On Mothering Sunday we gather and consider all those we call family, those who create communities of love around them, those who usually have some role in leading the community of love in one way or another. I’ve said it before, and I’ll probably say it again... historically, Mothering Sunday was a festival when domestic workers were given time off to visit their mother church, the church where they were baptised. It would often be the only time that young people would get to return to their families and as such it evolved to be a celebration of family links. A celebration of the communities of love within which we find ourselves wrapped.

Whilst I agree that it is right to thank and give thanks for those that look after us today, it is also wise to consider this as a wider celebration of a community of love, created by Jesus in that hour, on the cross. Motherly love, yes, but beyond that, to love in all its forms. In its earthly form in our love for one another and in its heavenly form, the love of our God, towards us, the children. We are all part of God’s family. He is devoted to us as his children and we in turn should be able to embrace all God’s children and welcome them with a love which is ‘motherly’. I pray that as we leave here today, we do so with the intention of giving thanks for those who have shown love to us. And, as we go about our lives this week, let us pray that we will show motherly love to all God’s children in the same way that he does to us.