

We need each other

Ricarda Witcombe *reflects on*
John 19:25b-27

Mothering Sunday is a day of celebration and pain. Together we have much to celebrate – all those who have mothered and nurtured us in so many different ways. There is also much to grieve – all the losses, those who are no longer with us, the betrayals and the lack of care.

Celebration and pain are both important, and we must deny neither. We see them both in this Gospel passage that takes us to the moments before Jesus dies. The last thing he does is to create a new family. This is the heart of what Church is: we are here for each other, given by love, for love. Both Mary and John, the beloved disciple, love Jesus with all their heart. It is their love for him, and his love for them, that will enable them to walk the painful path ahead. As Jesus gives them to each other, he invites them not to walk the path alone, but to care for each other as he cares for them.

Who are those people given to you to care for? And who are those who care for you? Take some time today to think about them and to pray for them. Whatever our age or gender, and whether we get on with each other or not, whether we feel included or not, we are God's gifts to one another, a means of God's grace in each other's lives. We need each other. 🙏



Lord Jesus Christ, you give us to one another to live in love and peace, and to care for everyone. Open our eyes to each other, that we may see and be seen, and that we may care and be cared for. Amen.

Motherhood in the Bible

Part III – two blessed mothers

by Becky Mynett

Becky Mynett concludes her series about motherhood in the Bible.

We have seen how God worked through some of the most unlikely women. This week we look at the story of Elizabeth and Mary from Luke 1.

Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah "had no children, because

Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years". When she becomes pregnant she gives thanks to God, who has "looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured".

When Mary wonders how, as a virgin, she can have a child, Gabriel reassures her with the news of Elizabeth's pregnancy, "for nothing will be impossible with God". This prompts Mary to accept what will happen to her, and straight away she rushes off to visit Elizabeth.

Both these women become mothers through divine intervention. Their children are special, but they are also blessed because God, not man, is the true Father, and this is an important part of the good news that Luke goes on to tell in his Gospel. 🙏

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

In the *Common Worship Pastoral Services* book there is "A Song of St Anselm", composed a thousand years ago. The refrain for it is "Gather your little ones to you, O God, as a hen gathers her brood to protect them."

The image of God as a bird brooding her young is a familiar one in Jesus' longing expressed in Luke 13 and in the image of the Spirit of God brooding over the face of the waters at creation. Brooding is what a mother bird does to both hatch eggs, and then keep the young warm and safe from harm. Last year a rescue hen of ours brooded seven guinea fowl eggs and, having hatched them, raised them as her own. Her fierce devotion brought these orphaned birds to maturity. God as mother bird is fierce but life-giving to all who need warmth and safety. 🙏

“Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.”

Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), Carmelite nun, mystic and theologian