

# THE SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT

14<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – Fourth Sunday in Lent (Mothering Sunday)

## Put an Easter Egg or Cross in your window now

Please display an Easter Egg in the window of your home or car this Easter!

To help you, there are some blank templates of an egg, a plain and a celtic cross attached to this *Sunday Supplement*, ready for decorating with pens, paints, coloured paper or applique of any kind. Why not get children or grandchildren to help? Produce more than one! If you need a pre-printed or laminated one, please get in touch with Stephen.



**Why might we do this?** First, to spread the joy of the season. Our world at present is even less happy than usual and it is our task to spread peace and joy. Children love to spot things in windows and will be delighted to notice eggs and crosses appearing around their neighbourhood.

And **this is evangelism**. This is the church provoking questions and reminding everyone in a gentle and accessible way that there is something more going on at present, something more than chocolate eggs from the supermarket, something intriguing, something about which they might wish to find out more. Displaying a cross alongside an egg might be especially interesting.

Don't wait for Easter to display these symbols: get them working as soon as you can. The secular world doesn't mark ecclesiastical seasons with the precision of the lectionary (see the commencement of Christmas in October!) so no-one should be offended if Easter Eggs begin to appear in windows now.

## Lent group (reading chapter 5 for this week)

A reminder of the details needed to access our Lent groups, which are held on Tuesday at 7.30pm and on Wednesday at 2pm and 7.30pm. You don't need attend the same session every week, or indeed attend every week at all. Following the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4235751855?pwd=VklnMDhaVkZhTGZYa0lBZ0lRdldqUT09>

Or use the Zoom app, or website [zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) with the following login details:

Meeting ID: 423 575 1855

Passcode: 5RKuy8

## Mothering Sunday

The idea of displaying Easter symbols, to remind people of the important Christian festival, brings to mind the way in which religious festivals have been adopted and perhaps neutralised by secular observance. It is sometimes said that Easter in the UK is waiting for Christians to reclaim it – to really make something of it in public – whereas Christmas is completely lost to secular influences. I'm not sure that the premises underlying those urgings are entirely correct, but the general point is a good one. We should be thinking about the ways in which we can use our festivals to highlight and teach the meaning that they convey.

Mothering Sunday is an example of a religious festival so completely overtaken by a secular idea – more thoroughly than Easter and Christmas – that the church has accepted defeat and adopted the new thing. Mothering Sunday originally fell on 'refreshment Sunday' – a break from the Lenten fast (to which there is a parallel on the third Sunday in Advent). People returned to their mother church, where they were baptised, or to the Cathedral as the mother church of their Diocese.

Through a combination of good intentions, importation from America, and commercialism on both sides of the Atlantic, we now have an occasion on which we give thanks for motherhood. In our secular lives, there is a strong sense in which this is an occasion for the benefit of those who manufacturer greetings card and the sort of chocolates that can be plausibly enveloped in a great deal of packaging.

I hope that in church we mark Mothering Sunday with more sensitivity and nuance, remembering that the associations we have with motherhood and our own mothers are complex and varying. In church schools we speak of *Valuing all God's children*, which entails a recognition that we are all differently made, and that we have all had very different experiences.

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;  
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.  
Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;  
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.  
Your warmth gives life to the dead,  
your touch makes sinners righteous.  
Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;  
in your love and tenderness remake us.  
In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,  
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

St Anselm

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT

### Collect

Merciful Lord,  
absolve your people from their offences,  
that through your bountiful goodness  
we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins  
which by our frailty we have committed;  
grant this, heavenly Father,  
for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever..

### Numbers 21:4-9

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.' <sup>6</sup>Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.' <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

### Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22

<sup>1</sup> O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures for ever.  
<sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,  
those he redeemed from trouble  
<sup>3</sup> and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.  
<sup>17</sup> Some were sick through their sinful ways,  
and because of their iniquities endured affliction;  
<sup>18</sup> they loathed any kind of food,  
and they drew near to the gates of death.  
<sup>19</sup> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress;  
<sup>20</sup> he sent out his word and healed them,  
and delivered them from destruction.  
<sup>21</sup> Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to humankind.  
<sup>22</sup> And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,  
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

### Ephesians 2:1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. <sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

### John 3:14-21

<sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

### Prayer after Communion

Lord God,  
whose blessed Son our Saviour  
gave his back to the smiters  
and did not hide his face from shame:  
give us grace to endure  
the sufferings of this present time  
with sure confidence in the glory that shall be revealed;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# MOTHERING SUNDAY

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.

## **I Samuel 1:20-end**

<sup>20</sup> In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the Lord.'

<sup>21</sup> The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. <sup>22</sup> But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, 'As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord, and remain there for ever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time.' <sup>23</sup> Her husband Elkanah said to her, 'Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only—may the Lord establish his word.' So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. <sup>24</sup> When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was young. <sup>25</sup> Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. <sup>26</sup> And she said, 'Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. <sup>27</sup> For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is given to the Lord.'

She left him there for the Lord.

## **Colossians 3:12-17**

<sup>12</sup> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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.

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

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.





