

Intercessions – Lent 4 (Mothering Sunday)

As *we pray* for the Church and the world, please respond to the petition ‘Lord, in your mercy’ by saying, ‘**hear our prayer**’.

Remembering how St Paul commended his fellow-believers to the ‘communion of the Holy Spirit’ *we pray* for Christians locally, nationally and throughout the world who cannot gather for worship today in their accustomed ways, and especially for those who are isolated and alone; that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who is everywhere present and fills all things, will in our apartness continue to bind us together in faith, hope and mutual love and support according to our means and circumstances; Lord, in your mercy...

In our world turned upside down by what we cannot control we pray for wisdom for leaders and policymakers in church, and government; in the face of anxieties about the nation’s economy and about personal finances as businesses close and jobs are lost, we pray for creative and helpful pro-action in industry and the services and retail sectors; may those with free-time use it wisely in wholesome ways, and contribute where they can to the common good; Lord, in your mercy...

Rejoicing in the gift and calling of motherhood on this Mothering Sunday, and bearing within ourselves memories good, bad and in-between, *we pray* that God may bless our mothers, those still living and those who have passed beyond the veil; Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for new mothers; shield them in their joy, strengthen them in their anxieties, surround them with the care and support they need; and protect their new-born children; Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for mothers who are elderly, frail or in care; for their support in suitable, safe and loving ways by family, friends and carers, especially at this time when communication and contact can be limited; Lord, in your mercy...

Loving Father, amid the changes and chances of this world *we pray* that you would confirm our confidence and hope in your sure mercy and your certain love; save us from fear; enable us to draw upon the strength of your Spirit to

amend and change our ways according to your purposes and in response to the needs of these challenging times; Lord, in your mercy...

Summing up our prayers for the Church and our needy world, *we pray*:

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Intercessions for Mothering Sunday, prepared by Elizabeth Dawson

Today is the 4th Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday – a day when we may choose to relax our Lenten intentions and celebrate motherhood and those in caring roles. This year we find ourselves in challenging and very different circumstances, unable to visit mothers and grandparents in person. Nevertheless, as Christians, we can still “touch” their lives and remember and thank them in other ways, so I am sending you these intercessions which I would have been sharing with you today in church had we been permitted to attend the eucharist. I hope that you will be able to sit down quietly and pray them with me and your fellow Christians at the appropriate time.

Let us pray.

At this time, when so many are fearful and uncertain, we are reminded of our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds. “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you” (Isaiah 66, 13a).

We pray for our nation and our world as we observe “The National Day of Prayer and Action” for healing and wholeness. We pray earnestly for all who are in positions of leadership with difficult decisions to make on behalf of us all. Grant them wisdom and compassion and give them the knowledge, skills and support to enable us to continue leading safe and healthy lives.

Lord hear us..... Lord, graciously hear us.

We give thanks and pray for the church in her protecting and caring ministry. We recall to mind Mary, the mother of our Lord. She was willing to be touched by God, willing to obey and to trust, as she took on the role of mother to the Saviour of the world. We pray today for God's touch as we face the days and weeks ahead in isolation from our families and friends. Bless our archbishops, Justin and John and our own clergy in their shepherding and nurturing roles, as they hold us all together in these uncertain times. And we pray for all people of faith praying in their own homes.

Lord hear us..... Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we praise and bless you as we celebrate "Mothering Sunday"; a chance to express thankfulness and joy as we remember our own mothers or carers, who have, or still are, serving their families. We also remember and pray for those for whom today will be difficult and sad. We ask that your unfailing love will surround them and that they will feel your presence in their lives.

We pray for our families and especially those planning a baptism, wedding or funeral for whom the present covid-19 crisis poses extra difficulties; for families with young people facing stress and anxiety over the cancellation of public exams, those who have special needs children; children who are vulnerable and those children who receive free school meals; for all families who will be facing life together and helping their children with their school work in limit spaces. Grant them patience, forbearance and understanding and the knowledge that they are not alone.

Lord hear us Lord, graciously hear us.

Uphold and support those "key" workers who will be called upon to keep life going on behalf of us all – those in the emergency services, the NHS, supermarkets, delivery drivers, government ministers and many more. Give them strength, courage and the determination to perform their duties willing and cheerfully for the good of all.

Lord hear us Lord, graciously hear us.

Loving heavenly Father, we ask you to bless all who are ill at this time, especially those whose treatments and procedures have been put “on hold” as a result of the covid-19 virus. Calm and relieve their anxieties and those who are caring for them. We remember those known to us who are in need of prayer at this time..... We remember those who have recently died, those who mourn, those who are caring for loved ones whose earthly lives are ending, and those whose anniversaries are at this time. May God grant them peace.

Lord hear us Lord, graciously hear us.

We join with Saint Helen, with Mary the mother of our Lord and with all the saints as we pray –

May the love of the Father fill our hearts, may the love of the Lord Jesus fill our homes and may the grace of the Holy Spirit bind us together in love in our families, today and always.

Heavenly Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.