

## Mothering Sunday

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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.

Our text may be found in today's gospel from John, chapter 19 and verse 27:

**'Here is your mother.'**

What have we all got in common ?

Now, there are as many different right answers to this question as there are people here in church today – perhaps even more. But the answer I was looking for from you is the simple fact that all of us, each of us, has this in common – we all have, or once had, a mum, a mother. And given today is Mother's Day, or Mothering Sunday if you prefer the title we give the day in church, it is good to remember one of the persons close to us, a significant other, to whom we owe so much – our mums !

So what do we owe our mums ? I'm not going to tell you but let me encourage you to take some time today to think about, reflect on, what you owe your mum – it might be quite a long list so have some paper and a pen handy.

That said, let me share two interesting and surprising ideas embodied in today – Mother's Day. That not only does each one of us have a mum but that in some respects, we also have two other mothers: one, the Blessed Virgin Mary; the other, the Church.

Okay, big surprise ! So how can that be true for me, for you, for us ?

Mary, as you know, is Jesus' mum. She was very special because the father of her child was God himself. So how does Mary become our mum, too ? The key is our text today – **'Here is your mother.'** At the foot of the cross, Jesus entrusts Mary to John and John to Mary. Facing the fact that he's shortly to die, Jesus wants his mum to be looked after by John and he wants John to be cared for by his mum. John, the beloved disciple, becomes Mary's son by adoption and we, too, as Jesus' brothers and sisters in faith, we can think of Mary in terms of a second mum. Mary is someone who is spiritually there for us; someone whose love and compassion is there for us; someone who invariably prays for us, for our well-being, not least at the hour of our death.

The Church can be seen as our mother in a different sense. The Church is not only a building, an organisation, an institution, but the Church is also made up of people. It is the Church, in its many expressions, that can look after us like a

mother, showing us the way to go, teaching us what we need to know, being there for us in times of trouble. I am who I am because of the many Christians who have been like a mother and a father to me – not least Father Peter and his wife, Ann.

So, today on Mother's Day, let's give thanks for our mothers but not only for our birth-mother but also for Mary and for the Church. Each, in turn, plays an essential part in mothering us and bringing us to our home in heaven – and we should be grateful.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

*Preached at the Parish Eucharist*

*St Mary the Virgin and All Saints, Potters Bar*

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G: Sermons 31 : Mothering Sunday

