

'Your mother'

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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.'

Happy Mother's Day. Good to be back. Good to be with you.

And a question. When ? When is Easter Day this year ? Sunday April 1st – just three weeks away. And today, on Mothering Sunday, on Mothers' Day, we are half way through Lent. And that is why the day gets its name – Mothering Sunday, Mothers' Day because, in the old days when rich folk had servants, today was traditionally part of the weekend off for them, a chance for servants to return home to their families, to their mums and dads, and to their 'mother' church where they'd grown up as children.

And it is interesting that the gospel for today is part of the story of Easter. It's Good Friday. Jesus has been arrested, tried and is being crucified. And standing there, at the foot of the cross, is John, the beloved disciple, and four women: Mary, the mother of Jesus; her sister; and two other Marys – Mary, the wife of Clopas; and Mary Magdalene.

And looking down from the cross, Jesus shows extraordinary care, love and compassion for two people who are so very important to him: John and Mary. To Mary, he says looking across to John: **'here is your son.'** To John, he says then looking across to Mary: **'here is your mother.'**

Jesus wants two of the people whom he loves to be there for each other, to look after each other when he's gone. And that's just what happens. From that day on, Mary goes to live with her new adopted son and John has Mary to care for and to care for him.

So, on Mothers' Day, let me ask you a question only you personally can answer. What have you to thank your mum for? If you could, what would you say to her? I can guess but only you know the truth. And a second question: how will you show that you are thankful grateful for all that she has done, does and will do for you?

And a last thought. If we owe a real debt of gratitude to our mum, to both our parents, to our family, what about our debt to Mary, the Mother of Jesus? And what about the debt we owe to the Church, our spiritual mother? It's good to

think that the church, the place where we are worshipping today is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin and All Saints so we are getting two for the price of one, being here is a reminder that in a spiritual sense that Mary is our mother too as well as the church named after her of which this building in Potters Bar is just a small part.

So I hope you enjoy answering the questions:

- what have I to be thankful for ?
- and how may I best express my thanks ?

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

Preached at the Eucharist

St Mary the Virgin and All Saints, Potters Bar

11th March 2018

G: Sermons 37 : Your mother

