

MOTHERING SUNDAY (YEAR B) Sunday 10 March 2024

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Mary in the temple (Luke 2: 33-35)

Traditionally the fourth Sunday of Lent has been kept as Refreshment Sunday (when the Church expresses joy in the middle of the Lenten fast) or Mothering Sunday. It is also a time to reflect on Mary the mother of Jesus. Luke's Gospel describes Mary taking the infant Jesus into the Temple. There the aged Simeon prophesies about Mary's close identification with the ministry and suffering of her son Jesus. The significance given to Mary within the Christian tradition differs considerably from one Church to another. Mothering Sunday provides an appropriate occasion to reflect on the place of Mary in different Churches today.

The image to stimulate reflection on the Gospel reading chosen for Mothering Sunday is *Mary mother of Jesus*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 2: 33-35; for reflection throughout the week)

The child's father and mother
were amazed at what was being said about Jesus.
Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary,
'This child is destined
for the falling and the rising of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be opposed
so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed –
and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
your mother Mary was truly blessed among women,
as she stood alongside you in pain and suffering.
Inspire our lives by Mary's example,
that we may share her dedication and her joy;
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 2: 33-35

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 2: 33-35)

Begin exploring Luke's account of Mary's encounter with the aging Simeon in the temple by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why were Mary and Joseph in the temple?
- What had Mary and Joseph heard Simeon say about Jesus?
- What is meant by the prophecy that Jesus will meet opposition?
- What is meant by a sword piercing Mary's own soul?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore the context for this passage in Luke's Gospel.

- Luke 2: 22-32

Explore the position of Mary in Luke's Gospel.

- Luke 1: 27-38
- Luke 1: 39-56
- Luke 2: 1-7
- Luke 2: 15-19
- Luke 2: 41-51
- Luke 4: 16-24

Explore the position of Mary in John's Gospel.

- John 2: 1-11
- John 19: 25-27

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Mothering Sunday and of the significance given to Mary the mother of Jesus in the Christian tradition by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Origin of Mothering Sunday
- Laetare Sunday
- Our Lady of Walsingham

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on the Gospel reading chosen for Mothering Sunday is *Mary mother of Jesus*. Draw on your experience of how different Churches regard Mary. For example:

- How is Mary regarded in your church and congregation?
- What is your experience of Mary in other churches?
- Have you experience of the Shrine in Walsingham or another Marian shrine?

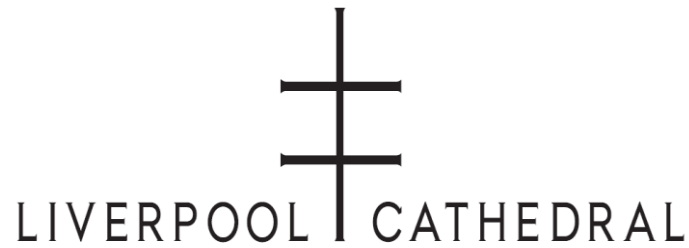
What have you learned about Mary mother of Jesus?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of Mothering Sunday or by the image of Mary mother of Jesus.

- Make a collage of classic images of Mary mother of Jesus.
- Make a poster on the life of Mary mother of Jesus.
- Create a display about Walsingham or another Marian shrine.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Mothering Sunday or on the image of Mary mother of Jesus

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EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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