

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## Mothering Sunday

Purple

**British Summer Time begins.  
Clocks go forward 1 hour.**



### Collect

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. **Amen**

### 1 Samuel 1:20-28 English Standard Version (ESV)

#### Samuel Given to the LORD

<sup>20</sup> And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the LORD.”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>21</sup> The man Elkanah and all his house 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, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” <sup>23</sup> Elkanah her husband 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> And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,<sup>[b]</sup> an ephah<sup>[c]</sup> of flour, and a skin of wine, and 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 my petition that I made to him. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I have

lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.

**Footnotes:** a. *Samuel* sounds like the Hebrew for *heard of God*. b. Dead Sea Scroll, Septuagint, Syriac; Masoretic Text *three bulls*. c. An *ephah* was about 3/5 bushel or 22 litres

**COMMENT:** “Weaning took place very late among the Israelites. According to 2 Maccabees 7:27, the Hebrew mothers were in the habit of suckling their children for three years. When the weaning had taken place, Hannah would bring her son up to the sanctuary, to appear before the face of the Lord, and remain there forever, i.e. his whole life long. The Levites generally were only required to perform service at the sanctuary from their twenty-fifth to their fiftieth year [see Numbers 8:24–25]; but Samuel was to be presented to the Lord immediately after his weaning had taken place, and to remain at the sanctuary forever, i.e. to belong entirely to the Lord. To this end he was to receive his training at the sanctuary, that at the very earliest waking up of his spiritual susceptibilities he might receive the impressions of the sacred presence of God.” This reading links in with the theme of Motherhood – but what Mother would give her child away? We have to remember Hannah had failed to conceive and had given up hope. For Hannah God had given her this child, and he was set to be a great prophet of the Lord, which he became. His mother would have visited the Sanctuary to worship, and watched her son become a great man, chose of God, and was overjoyed to have the privilege of being a mother. In the same way, Mary had to give up her son, even to death on a Cross, to be our saviour.

**John 19:25-27** English Standard Version (ESV)

**Mary Mother of Jesus becomes the mother of the Christian Disciple.**

<sup>25</sup> but standing by 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 nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

**COMMENT:** Of the four gospel writers, John is the only one who records Mary's presence at the cross. But it would be expected that Jesus' mother be in Jerusalem at Passover – after all, we read, “*Now his parents*

went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover"; Luke 2:41. Probably after Joseph's death – presumed to have taken place before Jesus began his ministry – Mary would come up to Jerusalem for the Feast with friends and relatives. Now her son is in trouble – arrested, tried, condemned, and now dying. Surely, Mary's place is close to her son. And so Simeon's prophecy given at Jesus' dedication comes to pass: "and a sword will pierce through your own soul also"; Luke 2:35. Whilst this latter verse is not in John's Gospel, doubtless he would have been aware of that prophecy. John's Gospel was finally penned some 15 to 20 years later, with Luke's Gospel in circulation for that period. At the foot of the Cross, Mary is near her son now, but her heart is broken. She is consoled by friends. Jesus with his dying breath commends the Beloved Disciple to his Mother and his Mother to the Beloved Disciple – our Lord has not only ensured the care of his Mother but in this one action has made Mary, the mother of the Christian disciple – we are all bothers and sisters of our Lord – provided we stand at the foot of the Cross!

**Psalm 34:12-21** *Venite, filii, audite me* Grail Psalter

**℟ The Lord rescues the just in all their distress.**

<sup>12</sup> Come, children, and hear me  
that I may teach you the fear of the Lord.

<sup>13</sup> Who is he who longs for life  
and many days, to enjoy his prosperity? **℟**

<sup>14</sup> Then keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from speaking deceit.

<sup>15</sup> Turn aside from evil and do good;  
seek and strive after peace. **℟**

<sup>16</sup> The Lord turns his face against the wicked  
to destroy their remembrance from the earth.

<sup>17</sup> The Lord turns his eyes to the just  
and his ears to their appeal. **℟**

<sup>18</sup> They call and the Lord hears  
and rescues them in all their distress.

<sup>19</sup> The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;  
those whose spirit is crushed he will save. **℟**

<sup>20</sup> Many are the trials of the just man  
but from them all the Lord will rescue him.

<sup>21</sup> He will keep guard over all his bones,  
not one of his bones shall be broken.

**✠ The Lord rescues the just in all their distress.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** In the Hebrew text the psalm has an acrostic form, each line beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The psalm also is in the wisdom style and so dates from the late Persian or early Greek period. Verses 11-20, or in the Greek numbering verse 12-21, as is true of the numbering above are a call to the moral life. Verse 21 (or 20 in the Hebrew numbering) is seen as a prophecy of our Lord. Jesus was spared the crurifragium (breaking of bones to speed up the death). Of the Passover lamb it instructs in Exodus 12:46 & Number 9:12; “You shall not break any of its bones”. It is the latter two verses which readily identify Jesus as the Lamb of God, a theme which John's Gospel employs. John may have reflected the identification that already was part of Christian preaching in his day.

### **Post Communion**

Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life: help us who have tasted your goodness to grow in grace within the household of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

May the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit, strengthen us for the Christian life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care, send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**