



*AMUA*

*THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK*

*April to June 2023*



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## Thoughts for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Inclusivity

'Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God' (*Romans 15:7*)

We are all the same: we judge other people by age and appearance and ethnicity and accomplishments and all the rest. We don't have time for those who don't appeal to us. But one of the great gifts of the gospel of Jesus was that his message was for the whole world, Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free. He welcomed all, for all humans are precious to God, being image bearers of God. So then, we are to welcome all sorts of people into the fellowship of God's people and have compassion on all, no matter what our sinful instincts may tell us.

**Question for thought:** How do I judge other people?

Gracious Lord, we pray for the Mothers' Union members in the remote province of Temotu in the Solomon Islands. Give them wisdom and courage as they support and train the women, as many are victims of gender based violence. May they be able to share the comfort of the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles.

## Thoughts for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Compassion

‘Let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another’ (*Romans 13:8*)

Rules and laws are good. They help us to live together. But in the end, all rules are summed up in the law of love. Without love to guide us, rules simply become regulations to be kept when others are looking. Love fulfils the law when no one can see us. God loves the unlovely and our love needs to be for those who we may not be naturally drawn to. Jesus was filled with compassion for those who were sick or hungry or without God. This is the way for his disciples as well.

### Question for thought:

Do I love people I don't even know?

Heavenly Father, we pray for Members in Chelmsford and St Albans in England as they meet together, support worldwide projects and focus on local needs in their dioceses. May they be able to share the hope and comfort of the faith in Jesus as they care for those in need.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023

### Christ is Risen

### Holy Week

‘The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep’ (*John 10:11*)

How precious are the words from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, ‘The Lord is my shepherd’. The psalm contains wonderful promises of protection and help, ‘even in the valley of the shadow of death’. In John’s Gospel, Jesus tells us that he is the Good Shepherd and that he protects us from sin and evil even by laying down his life. No wonder that the cross is the universal symbol of the Christian faith. From the death of Jesus comes forgiveness of our sins, peace with God and hope for the future. Amazing grace.

### Question for thought:

Am I simply trusting Jesus to take away my sins?

Heavenly Father we pray for the good health of mothers and children in Cape Coast in Ghana who often suffer due to malnutrition, anemia and malaria. May a solution be found. We also pray for the parenting classes and workshops to help parents discipline their children wisely.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### Peace be with you

‘And their eyes were opened and they recognised him’ (*Luke 24:31*)

Have you noticed that many funerals have turned into a celebration for the deceased rather than an opportunity to grieve as we care for the body? Part of this is because people are so fearful of death that they do not wish to be confronted by it. But the good news is that Jesus has defeated death. The two who walked to Emmaus, perhaps husband and wife, met a real person, one who ate and drank with them, not a ghost. He has tamed death, and through him we may have peace. We grieve but with confidence that those who belong to Jesus are with him now.

**Question for thought:** What hymns would I like at my funeral?

This Easter Day we give thanks and praise for the Lord Jesus who conquered death and rose again that we might have life. We bring before you the program ‘Embrace’ in Rwanda which helps women whose children are malnourished. May they be equipped with the relevant skills to help them improve their living conditions.

## Thoughts for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Perseverance

‘Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power’ (*Ephesians 6:10*)

I sometimes worry for my children and grandchildren. With each generation, it seems to be harder to be a convinced Christian. The world seems so antagonistic. Of course, this is not new. Many are the times in history when being a Christian was unpopular, not least in the beginning. Even now, however, Christians are put to death for their faith in some parts of the world. How can we persevere? In this passage, Paul tells us to have courage, to be strong, because we are dressed in God’s armour. The key to perseverance is trust in the Lord.

### Question for thought:

Do I pray for my family as often as I should?

Gracious Lord, we give thanks for the work of Mothers’ Union in the Diocese of Mara, Tanzania. We pray for them as they protect young girls in the community and educate them against gender based violence. May they be able to share the love of Jesus with them.

## Thoughts for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Faith

'If you faith as small as a mustard seed you can say this mulberry tree "Be uprooted and planted in the sea" and it will obey you' (*Mark 17:6*)

I often feel like the father of the son with he evil spirit who said to Jesus 'I believe, help my unbelief'. It's hard for a sinful person like me to have complete trust. But in talking about the power of faith as small as a mustard seed, Jesus teaches us a key lesson. Although we should have complete faith, it is not the amount of faith but the person in whom we have our faith which matters. Small faith in a great God is powerful. Complete faith in a lucky charm will achieve nothing at all.

### Question for thought:

How can I grow in faith?

Almighty God, our hearts are heavy as we see our sisters in South Sudan struggle with the effects of persecution and tribal conflicts. We long to see peace in this nation as they face extreme poverty in the midst these troubles. We pray for the members of Mothers' Union as they provide both immediate emergency relief and long-term development programs to help bring back hope to families in this troubled country.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### Fullness of Life

I am come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (*John 10:10*).

In our world, many people and the products they are selling offer Life. For example, freedom to be anyone we want to be is an offer of life. But Jesus understands us better than we do ourselves. He offered life in abundance to those who know him as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep. Those who trust him and follow him are the ones who have life and true freedom.

### Question for thought:

Do I listen to the world or to Jesus?

Gracious Lord we pray for our sisters in Port Moresby where life is often full of strife and conflict. We pray for the programs of adult literacy and managing major health issues and for their ministry in hospitals and prisons and campaigns against gender based violence. May they witness to the love of Christ in these situations.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023

### Eternal Hope

‘do not move from the hope of the gospel’ (*Colossians 1:23*)

Hope is a funny thing. I guess it is our way of taming the chaos of the future. However we all know that even the best hopes may not come to pass. Even the best of human promises are fragile. But if we remember that when you know Jesus, you are able to rely on the promises of the God who never fails, who never sleeps, who never wavers in his love, then we can have real hope. You can say, ‘My future is Jesus’ and that is a hope which cannot be taken away from you.

### Questions for thought:

What are my hopes? Who is my hope?

Heavenly Father we give thanks for the Mothers’ Union in the Northern Territory and for Pamela Powell, the Diocesan President. Even though it is a small branch we pray for them as they support marriage and family life particularly amongst indigenous peoples. May your name be honoured in all they do.

## Thoughts for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### God’s power and glory

‘Exalted to the right hand of God, (Jesus) has received from his Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you see and hear’ (*Acts 2:33*)

Jesus has left us for the time being, but in fact he is present with us through the Holy Spirit. Each believer receives the Spirit and it is by the power and presence of the Spirit that we call Jesus our Lord and God our Father. He bears witness to Jesus. He brings us to new birth. He prays for us. He enables us to bear good fruit for God. He leads us in the paths of righteousness. He is God’s indwelling presence with us, changing us from one degree of glory to another and so preparing us for our future home. To God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, be all praise and thanks!

### Question for thought:

Do I think of the Spirit personally, or do I call him ‘it’ ?

Heavenly Father we bring before you Mothers’ Union in Okene and Ibadan-South in Nigeria. Help them to stand firm in face of persecution and give them wisdom in creating opportunities for women and young girls to reach their full potential.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023

### Forgiveness

‘Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ (*Matthew 18:33*)

A counsellor once told me that Christian families have something which those who don’t follow Christ usually lack – the ability to repent and to forgive. This is not surprising. Jesus puts our asking God for forgiveness for our sins right at the heart of his Lord’s Prayer. He also reminds us, however, that to experience forgiveness from God is transforming, as we see the need to forgive others. This the point of the question asked above, which comes from a parable of Jesus. To be forgiven so much and yet not to forgive others is strange indeed. We remember that Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified him.

### Question for thought:

Are there those in my life whom I have not forgiven?

This week Lord, we pray for our members in Bunbury WA and Rockhampton in Queensland. May the light of the Gospel that they share shine before others so that they see their good works and give glory to our heavenly Father. (*Matthew 5:16*)

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### God our Father

‘God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out “Abba, Father”’ (*Galatians 4:6*)

The Doctrine of the Trinity sounds daunting and hard to understand. But here we have described the experience of God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught us to address God as our Father, aware that it is an intimate family name. We do so in the name of the Son and by the power of the Spirit. It is all such kindness by God towards those who do not deserve his overwhelming love.

### Question for thought:

Am I conscious of the love of God as I pray to him?

Almighty God, we bring before you the Mothers Union in North Kigezi in Uganda. We give thanks for the partnership they share with Armidale Diocese in NSW and pray for the support to clergy families as well as the training of Sunday School teachers and those enrolled at the Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College. Bless their visits to the sick, bereaved and female prisoners as they pray and read the Word of God with them.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### Provision

'Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?' (*Matthew 6:27*)

Have you ever thought about the complex process of getting food to your table, especially if you live in a city? Think of how many steps there are and how many people are involved. We ought to be thankful. But even more so we need to be thankful to God our Father. Jesus tells us to pray for our daily bread, and then trust him, not being anxious. It is a way of reminding us of the great truth that God is in charge of all things, and that he cares for us. It also reminds us to share our blessings with others, for we may be God's instruments in providing for their needs.

### Question for thought:

Is my life dominated by anxiety or trust in the Lord?

Heavenly Father we pray for members in Cashel and Ossory in All Ireland as they seek to support Ukranian families and care for patients suffering from dementia in a local nursing home. May they reflect the love of Jesus and be able to bring the Word of God to comfort those in need.

## Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### Thy Kingdom Come

'seek first his kingdom and his righteousness' (*Matthew 6:33*)

We have recently seen the death of a beloved Queen. Her rule or 'kingdom' lasted over seventy years. For many, her continued presence gave a sense of stability in a changing and sinful world. But she could not reign forever. Only God can do that. As we pray for his kingdom to come we are praying for the return of Jesus and the beginning of a new and wonderful era, when humans will fully acknowledge God and live in the new heavens and new earth without sin and evil. By seeking his kingdom, we are praying for it, but we are also even now living in it as we live for the King – Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Question for thought:

Do I long for Jesus to return?

Gracious Lord, please continue to give courage to the members in Northern Argentina as they put God's love into action in practical ways in a culture which does not value women highly. Pray they may discover meeting together involves both practical action, prayer and biblical preparation.