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AMUA

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

April – June 2024



Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 23rd June 2024

Peace and Safety

'Do not repay anyone evil for evil' (*Romans 12:17*)

Fighting and war is one of the greatest evils in human experience. We should pray for peace and for the end of wars which have broken out. But the blessing of peace belongs to each one of us. We need to be given to forgiveness and love. How many families are torn apart by disputes over money, or over things which we say to each other? It is so important that we seek reconciliation and peace, not least the capacity to say that we are sorry when we have been in the wrong. Remember, too how the Lord Jesus forgave the very ones who put him to death.

Question for Thought: Is there a fractured relationship in my life which I should try to repair?

Almighty God, our hearts are heavy with suffering and devastation of wars today in the Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Gaza. We pray for world leaders and for peace and stability worldwide. May there be an end to injustice and may there be peace. Above all may they know the true peace that comes through knowing you as Lord. Amen. (*Mothers Union Prayer Diary 2024*)

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 16th June 2024

Worldwide Fellowship

‘Resist (the devil), standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings’ (1 Peter 5:9)

As Christians we belong to a world-wide family of believers all sharing the same Father, the same Saviour and the same Spirit. The Mothers Union is a wonderful expression of that family, not least when we pray for each other and support each other. In our Christian family, there are people of different cultures, languages, races, ages, experience. We are called upon to love one another, not least when we hear of the real sufferings of believers in some parts of the world. We will learn so much from our sisters and brothers from all round the world. All this is a wonderful blessing from God.

Question for Thought: Do I pray for members of the Mothers Union across the world?

Almighty God we celebrate our global family of Mothers Union. We celebrate our precious fellowship in Christ. We bring before you our members in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Help them as they reach out to families in their many programs and point them to knowing you through your word. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Monday 1st April 2024

New Life in Christ

‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, and the new is here!’ (2 Corinthians 5: 17)

When the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, the future began. It will not reach its fullness until he comes again. But those who are in Christ through faith, are sharing that future with him. We already have forgiveness of sins, before the day of judgement. We already have the certainty of defeat of death and being with the Lord when we die. We already have the gift of the Holy Spirit. Of these things we may be sure, not because we are good people, but because our Saviour is great.

Question for thought: Am I living the new life in Christ?

Heavenly Father we pray for our sisters in Ontario, Canada where meeting together is difficult due to vast distances. May their many community activities bring honour and glory to your name so people will know your saving love. Also we pray for our members in Brisbane Diocese as they reach out through its projects that are supported by branches. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 7th April 2024

Blessings

‘Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the God’s will for you in Christ Jesus’

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

As those who belong to Christ Jesus, we are to be filled with rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving. But we cannot simply decide to be joyful or thankful. Our prayers, and especially our prayers of praise and thanksgiving arise from the vision we have of God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and in particular the wonderful works of God with which we are surrounded. Have you ever been on a walk in God’s creation and simply praised him for what you see? His blessings in nature are so abundant. Have you noticed that your prayers have been answered and thanked him? Have you been able to thank him even in the midst of distress because you know that he is in charge and has not left you? Have you thought about Jesus and all that he has done for us and been moved to lift up your heart in worship? That is what it means to rejoice, to pray and to thank God. We do it for what he has blessed us with in Christ.

Question for thought: Am I counting my blessings?

Gracious Lord, please continue to uphold members in the Diocese of Nord Kivu in DR Congo as beacons of hope in communities facing immense pressures and difficulties. May the hope we have in you through Jesus give them courage to persevere in their many outreach activities. We bring before you our members in Perth Diocese, and pray for Jan Rose as Diocesan President. Pray for the contact they have with South Sudanese members as they adjust to life in Australia. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 9th June 2024

Community Transformation

‘Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven’ *(Matthew 5:16)*

The Lord calls upon us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Again and again, Christians have looked after the poor, the dispossessed, the sick and the elderly. Especially we are called on to share the gospel of Jesus which has the power to transform individuals and communities. But our good works are not intended to bring glory to ourselves or secure a place in heaven. The way in which they are done are intended to glorify our Father in heaven.

Question for Thought: How do we love our neighbours?

Merciful God, we bring before you members in the New Guinea Islands in Papua New Guinea as they care for the many victims of domestic violence. May they have compassion and kindness as they bring comfort and share your love. We pray too, for our members in Newcastle (NSW) as in your name they care for those in hospital in the maternity units and share coffee and care in the Children’s Court. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 2nd June 2024

Nurturing family faith

‘From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’
(2 Timothy 3:15)

These words were addressed to Timothy by Paul. He seems to have been referring to the teaching of Timothy’s mother and grandmother. The Jewish people were told by God to pass the faith to their children (*Deuteronomy 6:20-21*). The home is the most important Bible College! The common Christian practice of reading the scriptures and praying as a family is immensely important. From their earliest days, children of the Christian home will see the faith and hear the faith, and so be challenged to trust in the Lord.

Question for Thought: Do I do all I can to teach my children and grandchildren and to pray for them?

Dear Heavenly Father as we think of families across the world may they come to know you and live in the shelter of your love. May they experience the peace and hope that can resolve differences and the wisdom to fulfil your purpose in our lives. We especially pray for Johannesburg in South Africa, Derby in England and Willochra in South Australia. Amen. (*Mothers Union Prayer Diary 2024*)

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 14th April 2024

Walking with God

‘Walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God’.
(*Ephesians 5:2*)

Once we understand the love of God in Christ, our lives are transformed. Instead of walking in the way of the world, following our own desires, we seek to please the Lord. At the very heart of our obedience is love, love for God and love for neighbour. In particular there is the practice of forgiveness, just as we have been forgiven. Furthermore, our forgiveness has been so costly, as Christ loved us, dying on the cross that we may have peace with God. And so, every day we are to walk in the way of love, forgiving others, caring for others, honouring others, whoever they may be.

Question for thought: Does the love of Christ control my life?

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the many members in Papua New Guinea and pray for those members in the Diocese of Dogura. We pray for their prison ministry and also as they campaign against gender-based violence. May they assure them of your love and care for them with the Lord as their shepherd. May our members in Canberra-Goulburn Diocese continue to trust you as they seek your wisdom in knowing the way forward. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 21st April 2024

Eternal Life

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’. (*John 3:16*)

Facing death is not easy. Left to ourselves we do not know whether this is the end of everything, or whether there is something more beyond. Many people just prefer to think that like the animals we die and are no more. But if we listen to the voice of God himself in his word, he tells us that we all survive death. As we know, we deserve nothing but condemnation in the next life. But God’s love is so great that when we trust Jesus, we may be sure we have the joys of life in his presence for evermore. Why are we sure? Because in his resurrection, Jesus defeats death.

Question for thought: Am I trusting Jesus with my eternal future?

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the many members in Tanzania and particularly in the Diocese of Victoria Nyanza and for the opportunities they have to share Christ’s teaching on marriage and family life. May they trust in you as they cope with unemployment and poverty. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 26th May 2024

An empowered Church

‘Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit’ (*Ephesians 5:18*)

The presence of the Spirit is not only personal, it is a mark of the Church as well. The Spirit leads us to the Father through the Son. The Spirit unites us in Christ. The Spirit enables us to serve one another, whether by the gifts of the Spirit, or through the songs we sing to the Lord and to one another. The Christian life is not isolated and merely personal. The Lord Jesus laid down his life for his Church and when we come to know him we are immediately united to one another. It is no accident that the first fruit of the Spirit is love, for we are to love God and to love our fellow-believers also and care for them.

Question for thought: How important is Church to you?

Gracious Lord, we pray for members in Oru and Oleh in Nigeria. Thank you for their courage in facing persecution and protect them from violent attacks. As they care for women and girls in their communities help them to point them to you through the love of Jesus in dying for them. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 19th May 2024

Fruit of the Spirit

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, faithfulness and self-control' (*Galatians 5:22-23*)

Relationships change us. When Jesus becomes our Lord, we are transformed. He gifts us with his Spirit and the Spirit works within us to make us more like Jesus, day by day. The wonderful fruit of the Spirit, beginning with love and ending with self-control, could be a description of Jesus himself. As we know, we must struggle with sin and seek to live like Jesus. But we also realise that we cannot do this on our own, but by the power of the Spirit of God. Thank God for his wonderful mercies!

Question for thought: Am I thanking God for the wonders of his grace?

Our Father in heaven, we give thanks for the members in Bunbury, Western Australia and Rockhampton in Central Queensland and for their commitment to serving you. May they continue to do the good works you have prepared for them to walk in as they support families and those facing challenges and share with them about your love and mercy. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 28th April 2024

Seek first God's Kingdom

'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well'. (*Matthew 6:33*)

Jesus has just taught his disciples to pray first and foremost that God will hallow his name and that his kingdom will come, that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Only then do they ask God concerning their physical needs for food and spiritual need of forgiveness and protection from evil (see *Matthew 6:9-13*). Now he contrasts the way of the world, with its ceaseless hurry to obtain riches, with the way of life of the disciple. Our business is to seek the kingdom first. God's kingdom is his rule, and to seek his kingdom is to trust him and to make it our first aim in life to please him. We are to do his will every day, conscious of his promise to care for us.

Question for thought: What is the aim of my life?

Gracious Lord, we pray for members in the Diocese of Muhabura in Uganda as they seek to be faithful to your word and promote Christian family values through their parenting program, prison ministry, and hospital visitation so they can support stable family life. We also pray for the Diocese of the Northern Territory so that they will be able to continue to witness to God's love. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 5th May 2024

Gifts of the Spirit

'Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good' (1 *Corinthians* 12:7)

Just as every believer in Jesus has received the Holy Spirit, so have we all received gifts of the Spirit. These gifts differ from person to person, but they have all the same aim: to build up the body of Christ, his church. There are spiritual dangers here. Some gifts are very public and can be misused to feed the ego of the person who has received them. Sometimes people demand that their gifts will be used, whether they are needed or not. Sometimes we think that our gifts make us important. But the whole purpose of the gifts is for the common good. And the gifts are to be exercised in love. As the Bible teaches us, 'If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing' (1 *Corinthians* 13:3)

Question for thought: How am I serving my fellow believers?

Merciful Lord, we pray you will guide the members of the Diocese of Uppershire in Malawi as they support the many challenges individuals and families face. May they have the opportunity to share God's love through the Lord Jesus and be assured that he is upholding them in his everlasting arms. Amen.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 12th May 2024

Thy Kingdom come

'the kingdom of God is in your midst' (*Luke* 17:21)

Jesus preached the coming of the kingdom of God. When it comes, God's authority will be recognised and submitted to. But when he was asked the time of this event, he said something that seemed very strange: 'the kingdom of God is in your midst'. As time went on, following the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus, it became clear that Jesus himself is the King of God's kingdom, the true Lord and ruler of humanity. We still pray, 'May your kingdom come', but at the same time we know that it has appeared in Jesus. This is why we share the gospel that Jesus is Lord and why we live to please him. We are in God's kingdom while we wait for the final revelation of his kingdom.

Question for thought: Is Jesus my Lord?

Heavenly Father we bring you before you our sisters in Twic East in South Sudan. We pray that there will be peace among the various tribes in South Sudan and that members will be able to share that true peace comes through a relationship with you. Protect them as they provide emergency relief and support each other. We also pray for our members in Gippsland and Maryann Ashton as she leads the Diocese. Amen.