



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 3 JULY 2022

Family and friends

For some of us family and friends take priority. Often this can result in an imbalance of power with the family and friends making unreasonable demands. Often the demands of faith and church can result in resentment or even neglect of family and friends. However, as we are 'called' so we must answer. And our response to the gospel is our vocation. Jesus responded to a question about his family with a sweeping gesture to those on the fringe – the lost and outcast, the unacceptable? – and declared that they were his family. Jesus, the teacher, called his disciples his friends. All we have to do is open our arms wider.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. Ephesians 3: 14-15

Mothers' Union opens our hearts and minds to a more inclusive, indeed a world-wide, family. We can make friends of those unknown and unseen because we all share in the Body of Christ and work together for the common good.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 10 JULY 2022

Challenging relationships

Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone thought the same way as...? Many of our challenging relationships arise from the prejudices we carry, or from differences in expectations of behaviour, manners, interpretations, personality. Not everyone thinks the same way. Human beings are very complex creatures. Governments and religions are both in the business of formulating policy that will help humans live peaceably together. On a community and personal level, Christians endeavour to live in love with one another – a challenge indeed and spiritual work for us all.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:27

Many of our Mothers' Union sisters live in situations where relationships are broken, dangerous, life-threatening. Many of our sisters in Christ in more 'peaceful' countries are also subject to violent, coercive, relationships. Let us pray for those who are working for a better understanding of those who abuse and of those suffering abuse. We hold before you, loving Lord, any in challenging relationships.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 17 JULY 2022

Flourishing relationships

We might think of flourishing relationships as the big family picture – all happily getting on together, an abundance of uncles and cousins, holidays together etc, etc. Being related by birth doesn't guarantee our happiness or our growing into a loving, generous disciple in the Body of Christ. The sharing of a Christmas letter over years, a twice-yearly phone call, a chat after church, a disagreement mutually resolved, intergenerational friendship based on a mutual interest – all our genuine encounters can lead us to flourish, producing the fruits of God's love.

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. Psalm 52:8

We are asked to pray this week for Mothers' Union in Burundi. People in Burundi consider marriage one of the main events of their culture. The dowry is paid in livestock and after a two-day ceremony the bride leaves her family to live with her husband's family. Polygamy was practised although it forbidden by civil law. Please pray for the safety and status of women in this mainly Christian society.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 24 JULY 2022

Church family relationships

It is a tragedy of human communities is that those called to be best are often sorely tempted. Even more disturbing is that we humans, even though we are disciples of Christ, often don't see who we are or what we are doing. Despite being chosen, royal, holy, God's beloved, we let our spite and self-importance rule our behaviour, we choose unholy means to promote ourselves or deflate others. Nevertheless, we ARE God's own. God loves us and is always merciful. May we repent. May we rejoice in our family the Church.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2: 9-10a

The ideal church family prays for the wellbeing of all. The Diocese of Sodor and Man writes: 'We want to make life better for everyone, including ourselves, through faith in Jesus Christ. We want life

in our communities, churches, nation, and as individuals to be enriched by the Gospel and reflect the joy of the Kingdom of God’.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 31 JULY 2022

MU hands across the world

Our hands are such valuable things. They can apply themselves to almost any task – needlework, shovelling coal into a steam engine, mending timid animals burnt in a bush fire. They are ultra-sensitive: the tips of fingers can tell us about a child with fever. In the thick of everything, they are very prone to damage and when that happens we are - yes - handicapped. Mothers’ Union is called to be hands-on, a finger in every pie. It is personal touch that heals and comforts, protects and teaches. Reserve and apprehension handicaps the Lord’s work. Let your tender touch bring God’s love to another’s life – wherever you are in the world.

“Give thanks to the Lord; call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Isaiah 12: 4-5

As we pray for members in the diocese of Melbourne, we give thanks for the hands that create gifts for those experiencing trauma (trauma teddies for Kenya), sadness (cot blankets for prem and still born babies) or those away from home (hats, scarves and beanies for seafarers), and for the hands folded in prayer.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 7 AUGUST 2022

MU past, present and future

MU was born out of compassion for those on the margins of society, in the tradition of Christianity which itself came alive as Jesus walked among the lepers and praised the Samaritans. We do our best reflection when looking at the radical past and seeing how that translates into today’s society and culture. Mary Sumner took Jesus’s words, ‘the prophets told you... BUT I tell you’ Matt 5-8 and applied them to the young women who were used and abused by the business leaders and condemned by the church. Jesus taught a ‘New Righteousness’ in the Sermon on the Mount. May MU continue to face society with Christian love and action.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, Hebrews 12: 1-3

Let us pray for the diocese of Aipo Ronga in PNG and for their active Mothers' Union. While traditional ways of life are recognised, the future is being shaped by an all girl choir, 'Friends of Jesus', and the celebration of Mother Dorothy Siep's graduation as Bachelor of Education with Honours. Thanks be to God.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 14 AUGUST 2022

Mu vision

Budgets are presented with 'projections'; there's talk of 'Futures'! and predictions are formulated/put up/delivered by everyone from the clergy to the corporate managers to farmers to educators. The fact of the matter is that we actually don't KNOW what is going to happen next. Having a vision of what could happen if ... is a perfectly legitimate dream. This is the stuff of the religious life. It is the working of the Holy Spirit in those who would listen and obey.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Psalm 25: 4-5

As we pray for MU in the diocese of Liverpool, we give thanks for their vision. It is called Coops Foyers and they collect household goods for young people coming out of care and are ready to set up their own home. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 21 AUGUST 2021

Mu mission

Mission is what happens when you have a vision and then get the energy/impulse/urge to go out and do it. We become our very own projectile, a human missile, a group rocket. Looked at like that, it's all very exciting and Mothers' Union IS very exciting when there is energy and vision and a strong sense of Christian mission. This sense is not predicated on a business model that depends on outcomes, nor is its tone set by social standing and kudos. Mission is plain, honest-to-goodness action for the wellbeing of another, enacted with Christian love and without any expectation of thanks or reward.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28: 19-20

We pray for Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and remember especially the Zone C Trustee, Pamela Abana. Pamela is currently the Melanesian Provincial Mothers’ Union President. which covers 9 Dioceses and a total membership about 17,000. Pamela says, ‘MU members live in the many scattered islands and transport and communication in all forms is still one of our major issues.’ We thank God for Pamela’s clear notion of Christian mission and her sympathetic work for women’s empowerment.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2022

Love and service

The trouble with love and service is that it comes easily for those who have that sort of personality and that the opposite is true; a personality that wants and expects love and service to be done to them. The outcome often results in abuse in all its forms. Christian love and service, following Christ’s commandments, is devastatingly difficult, simply because it demands sacrifice. To go against one’s inclination is always, always difficult, even when you know it is the right thing to do. Jesus said, ‘Love your enemies’ and even more, ‘Do good to those who hate you’.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 1 John 4: 7-8

This week we pray for the Diocese of Southwark and give thanks for its love and service to young people who sing in church and create street art. We give thanks and pray for the new bishop of Croydon, the Rt Rev Dr Marlene Rosemarie Mallett, a woman of colour, ‘appointed by the Queen’.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2022

Creator and creation

Each day more concrete is laid, more roads and car parks are rolled out. Is it a desire for easy maintenance, the impression of cleanliness, a genuine fear of DIRT, the urge to control that which is

deemed out-of-control, which has compelled our Western smothering of Mother Earth that is now verging on annihilation? Each day let us praise the Works of the Lord. Try contemplating the creation theology underlying the Cantic, *Benedicite, omnia opera* in Morning Prayer BCP and/or just plan enjoy saying!

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude.
Genesis 1: 31-2:1

The Facebook posts of the Anglican Church in Nigeria are full of clergy news and photos: however, news that Nigeria's forests are rapidly disappearing and that loggers struggle to eke out a living is not mentioned. Let us pray for those families dependent on the world's demand for MORE and let us pray for the effect of loss of trees on God's living, breathing creation. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-13/nigeria-forests-rapidly-disappearing-as-loggers-struggle>.



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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

Climate change

An study of literature or art or music can open up a wealth of understanding and appreciation of human endeavour from farming to politics to, yes, climate change and the Bible. Our perception isn't just informed by a pile of words or paint or musical notation. We learn about human nature from Dickens or the Brontes but also from the accounts of Creation in Genesis. Whether they are actual or not, they convey much about human nature and even more about God. The BIG message about the earth and the goodness thereof is that it's God's gift to humans and with that gift is RESPONSIBILITY. The ensuing problem is human greed for POSSESSION. Gotta eat that apple! When we believe that is the problem, then we can begin to repent, take responsibility and give up our greed.

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it, Psalm 24:1

Jocelyne Razafiarivony is the MU provincial coordinator for Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world and home to more than 28 million people. She recently spoke at two UNCSW (United Nations Commission on the Status of Women) on events around the relationship between climate change and gender inequality. See MU website for her speeches.



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SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2022

harvest

Isn't it wonderful when your church has the habit of sharing? There's someone with a lemon tree who will leave a box for folk to take some or there may be figs or grapes or almonds. Or someone may have baked because they love doing that or bring a feast of their national dish. Real flowers at church, simnel cake and posies; they all speak of God's bounty and our gratitude. The origin of all these Anglican ways is Celtic spirituality brought into England's green and pleasant land from Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This is a wonderful inheritance, grounding us, so to speak, in a theology of Creation and connections with the earth, its richness and its beauty.

You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. Psalm 65:11,

Not all folk in the Diocese of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba (NECA) are able to share in God's bounty. Mothers' Union is adopting Church and Community Mobilisation to help communities break free from dependency and self-solve issues such as poverty – either financial or educational. They also run soup kitchens and run nutrition programmes,



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SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2021

Environmental issues

The environment is that which surrounds us – where we live and move and have our being. Many of us can choose what our environment is – we have a dwelling place and in it we put the necessities of life, table chairs bed etc etc – and, according to our means and taste, we add – stuff. It is all the stuff that makes our environment and – eventually, it the wider scheme of things – destroys it. When we truly want to address the situation, we will do as Jesus bids us:

Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith! Luke 12: 24-28

And then we begin to change our ways.

Decisions are more immediate in the diocese of Rumonge in Burundi where the environment in three localities was seriously affected by heavy rain that devastated infrastructures and crops. 46 houses, 9 churches, 21 classrooms and various crops have been destroyed. Please pray for the victims and the restoration of their buildings, crops and lives.

