

Sunday 22nd March 2020 - Mothering Sunday



Exodus 2.1-10

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Psalm 34.11-20

11 Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
12 Which of you desires life,
and covets many days to enjoy good?
13 Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.
14 Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.
15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from
the earth.
17 When the righteous cry for help,
the Lord hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the Lord rescues them from them all.
20 He keeps all their bones; not one of them
will be broken.

John 19.25b-27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Today is Mothering Sunday, which for many people brings its own challenges, and it is also a strange day for us as a church family, as it is the first Sunday where we are not meeting together for our usual service. Some of you might be anxious, perhaps you feel alone or lost. But the readings for this morning offer us hope in the face of the unknown. Hope, because they show us that love continues undaunted even in the face of upheaval and change. Hope, because they are both stories of the world falling apart, but the strong, maternal boldness of love and care carrying on regardless. These are stories of God taking part in our struggles and pain, and carrying us through to the other side. They are glimpses of strong, nurturing, determined, grieving, compassionate love which is the maternal nature of our God.

In the reading from the book of Exodus, Moses' mother has to face the unthinkable. Her newborn son is doomed to be killed by the Egyptians if he is discovered, so eventually she has to give him up, to hide him and let him go, in order for him to have a chance at survival. Their family is separated, but through the compassion of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses is saved.

The gospel reading is a powerful example of how the bonds of love continue, even in the face of death and loss. In Jesus' act of asking his mother and the beloved disciple to become family together, we see a love that overcomes - a nurturing, mothering love which continues through everything.

So for us today, even though we cannot meet together, let's remember that God's love and care for us continues always. And even while we are anxious about the future, we know that God enters into it alongside us. We may not know what lies ahead, but we do know that we are not alone. Our hope is found in the unchanging nature of God who loves us completely and fiercely. We have hope in the fact that we continue to be God's church, no matter where we are, who we are with, and whatever we face. God be with you. - *Rev Cat*

Please pray for: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Adam, Andrew Barfield, Alan Seeley, Kathy Steele, Frank D, Peggy, Pat, Natacha and Marianne, Andrew Derrett, Christine, Stephen, Julie, Samantha, Clare Baxter, Jill, Rex, Molly Johansen, Mike Harding, Emily, Brian Sears, Tilly, Christine P, Gloria Elmer, Naomi Bloomfield as due date draws near!

Birthdays this week: Nigel Messenger (22nd)

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<http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/>

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