

A Service for Mothering Sunday

As a mother comforts a child so will I comfort you, says the Lord.
Isaiah 66.13

Greeting

Praise God who loves us.

Praise God who cares.

We have come together today
to give thanks to God
for all those people who have nurtured us,
and to offer ourselves to nurture others, with God's help.
We have also come to acknowledge the pain of a hurting world, where we have
failed to nurture each other.
We come to receive again
from the God of compassion and mercy.

Let us pray together..

**Loving, compassionate Father,
as a mother hen gathers her chicks,
so you draw the whole human family to yourself.
Bring us together now, Lord,
that we may today and forever be united under your wing
in all our sorrows and joys. Amen**

A large candle may be lit.

We light this candle to remind us of the love of God and the love of all those who
have nurtured us.

Blessed be God for ever.

We give thanks and praise you, our God, for all mothers and all mother-figures in our
lives, who have loved and laughed and laboured as they cared for us their children;

Blessed be God for ever.

We praise you, our God, for all mothers and all mother-figures in our lives who have
wept in sorrow and joy for us their children:

Blessed be God for ever.

We praise you, our God, for Jesus, born of a woman and nurtured in her love, and
for Mary, a reminder of your patient, waiting love.

Blessed be God for ever.

Confession

We all fall wander far from God. Let us call to mind our sins and be aware of our failure to value the love of others and our failure to love as Christ has loved us.

Silence for reflection

Your love gives us life.
Sometimes we fail to live as your children.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

You call us to do good.
Oftentimes we seek our own good.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

You hear us when we cry for help.
Sometimes we ignore the cries of others.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect

Praise God who loves us.
Praise God who cares.

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

John Chapter 6: 22-40

The Bread from Heaven

On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?”

Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”

Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Therefore, they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ”

Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Song of St Anselm

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.**

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride,
tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds,
in sickness you nurse us and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying, we are born to new life;
by your anguish and labour we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead,
your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;
in your love and tenderness remake us.

In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

Talk

Hymn - Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer (Bread of Heaven)

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven
Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar

Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer;
Be thou still my strength and shield;
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

Affirmation of Faith

Praise God who loves us.
Praise God who cares.

Let us declare our faith in God.

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Prayers

As children of a loving God who always listens to our cries,
let us pray to our Father in heaven.
God of love
hear our prayer.

Loving God,
you have given us the right to be called children of God.
Help us to show your love in our homes
that they may be places of love, security and truth.
God of love
hear our prayer.

Loving God,
Jesus, your Son, was born into the family of Mary and Joseph;
bless all parents and all who care for children;

strengthen those families living under stress
and may your love be known where no human love is found.
God of love
hear our prayer.

Loving God,
we thank you for the family of the Church.
We pray that all may find in her their true home;
that the lonely, the marginalised,
the rejected may be welcomed and loved in the name of Jesus.
God of love
hear our prayer.

Loving God,
as we see the brokenness of our world
we pray for healing among the nations;
for food where there is hunger;
for freedom where there is oppression;
for joy where there is pain;
that your love may bring peace to all your children.
God of love
hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

As God's children, and heirs with Christ we cry in the Spirit, 'Abba', Father.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Loving God,
accept the cries of our heart as we offer you prayers;
through them transform us and all creation until you are in all and through all.
We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

The Peace

Praise God who loves us.

Praise God who cares.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, 'As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Hymn - Tell out My Soul

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and forever more!

Prayer for Mothers and Mother-figures

Praise God who loves us.

Praise God who cares.

For the care of mothers and mother-figures;
We are thankful

For their patience when tested;
We are thankful

For their love when tired;
We are thankful

For their hope when despairing;
We are thankful

For their service without limit;
We are thankful

**Thank you God for the love of our mothers and mother-figures in our lives:
thank you God for their care and concern;
thank you God for the joys they have shared with us;
thank you God for the pains they have borne for us;
thank you God for all that they give us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The Blessing

Praise God who loves us.
Praise God who cares.

May God, who gave birth to all creation, bless us:
may God, who became incarnate by an earthly mother, bless us:
may God, who broods as a mother over her children, bless us.
May almighty God bless us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever.
Amen.

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

“As truly as God is Father, so just as truly is he our Mother.”
Julian of Norwich