

+WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



Mothers' Sunday

A plethora of readings are available to choose this Sunday depending on the needs of your parish. If you are observing the fourth Sunday of Lent you'll be reading the parable of the prodigal son in Luke's gospel.

If your parish is observing Mothers' Sunday, then you'll be reflecting either on Simeon's prophecy to Jesus' mother in Luke 2, or on the fulfilment of that prophecy in John 19 when Mary's own soul is pierced as she watches her son's crucifixion. These are a rich series of texts and it would be interesting to read them alongside one another in a mid-week bible study.

Please also take the opportunity to remind your congregation that we celebrate 'Mothers' Sunday' and not 'Mother's day': the emphasis being on the mothering and nurturing that is done by all people (female or male and regardless of whether you have biological children of your own or not) collectively by the church community.

We see this beautifully enacted in John 19. As Jesus is being crucified, he looks down and sees Mary, his mother, and John, his young disciple, and he adopts them to one another. From now on his mother has a son, and this boy has a mother.

The first thing to notice is that the mothering that Jesus encourages from the cross has nothing to do with biology and is instead a function of adoption. This mirrors our own adoption into the family of grace as described by St. Paul in Romans 8.

The second thing to notice is that in this act, Jesus is giving birth to the church. A community has been formed that transcends the boundaries of biology and tribe. A family is founded that strangers can be adopted into. As Jesus' side is pierced, so is Mary's soul, and from those wounds a new community is formed. It is into this wound that a new lineage can be grafted in.

Mothers' Sunday is for many people an emotionally complex moment in the calendar: we bring to it our hopes, fears, losses, our joys and pains. My prayer for the parishes of Lancashire as they meet this weekend is that it would also be a redemptive time as we reflect together on Jesus and the birth of a new kind of community in John 19, and as we find our place in that same community, the Church.

Rev James Lawrence, Canon Missioner for Blackburn Cathedral

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES