

THURSDAY JUNE 15TH 2023 -

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ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

“SERVING GOD IN PRAYER AND HUMILITY”

Welcome everyone to our Thursday prayers.

Introductory Prayer.

Lord, guide us this day in all that we say and do; Lord in all things make us true. Keep us safe from evil thoughts and deeds aware of other people's needs. May we not wander from the straight and narrow way; may we trust in you Lord every day, Lord in all things, make us true. Amen Rev. Moira Jameson, Province of Scotland

We say together the **Mothers' Union Prayer**

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name . Amen

Monthly Prayer

Loving Lord,

We look back with gratitude

On all that has been achieved thus far

In the name of Mothers' Union worldwide.

As we look to the future, we pray that we may always

Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God, Amen.

Our Reading Today is taken from: Hosea Chapter 6 vs 3

“Let us acknowledge the Lord;

Let us press on to acknowledge him.

As surely as the sun rises,

He will appear,

He will come to us like the winter rains

Like the spring rains that water the earth,

Israel believed that as surely as seasonal rains fell, reviving the earth, God's favour would return and restore her.

This morning our Reflection is entitled “Serving God in Prayer and Humility.

I think we all know what it means to *Serve*, so this morning let us look at the meaning of **Prayer** and **Humility**.

Prayer is how Christians communicate with God. Christians believe that it is through prayer that God's grace and guidance are given. We think of prayer as two-way communication that gives comfort, as God is listening and sending messages back, and we hear them if we are listening. “Be still and know that I am God ” calls us to take time and pause and reflect. It reminds us that God is still in control no matter what happens in our lives.

These are some of the reasons why Christians pray.

To adore and praise God: Saying sorry and asking for forgiveness: Thanking God with a grateful heart: Asking for help and praying for Others.

Many Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is active when they pray. In the Bible, (Ephesians 6:18) St Paul encourages the early Christians to “pray in the Spirit”. He writes **“Pray in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers and requests”**.

But there are times when it is difficult to pray. We may go through dry spells when God seems distant and praying is hard, or the opposite when God seems to be in the same room as we pray and He responds in ways far greater than we dared ask or ever would have imagined. By God’s Grace, our prayers can and will have an effect. **“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5 :16)”**

We thank God for the privilege of Prayer and ask for forgiveness for the times when we seem to take it for granted. We are grateful for those times when He answers quickly and positively and if we pray sincerely about everything, we may be lucky and experience God’s peace.

Humility

The Bible defines **Humility** as **“the fear of the Lord”** (Proverbs 22:4) and most people seem to agree that it is also freedom from pride or arrogance, the state of being humble.

The Old Testament use of the Hebrew word “pride” has only a few positive meanings and they all refer to God and His Majesty and excellence. Otherwise, it is used to describe arrogance, insensitivity to the needs of others, conceit, a scoffer or mocker, haughtiness (arrogantly superior), stubbornness and a lack of respect for God. Even a small amount of these characteristics are still prideful. It is thinking higher of ourselves than we ought to. This can be in action or thought.

Pride is all around us – we see it in people who are rich and powerful, and in successful and famous people, but we don’t have to look far to see it in our own lives or those near to us.

Choose to humble yourself before others, “clothe yourself with humility”. No matter how poorly someone treats you, try to consider them better than yourself. Choose forgiveness and self-control over pride and retaliation. This is difficult, but God can help us set aside our prideful instincts and desires.

One of the greatest saints whose story is indeed known but often neglected, is **St Joseph**. He is the silent saint, humble and obedient, a simple carpenter. Perhaps this is why we find him so easy to overlook.

St Joseph did not set out in search of glory and renown, yet he was chosen for a more glorious role than he ever could have imagined. When he met Mary he was looking for a wife, not the Mother of God. He became Mary’s rock and the shield of the Christ Child, a model of fortitude and faith.

Despite the gravity of his duties, St Joseph never assumed an air of self-importance or vanity. He never grew puffed up at this honour and responsibility; he simply responded with holy wonder and perfect obedience.

Even in death St Joseph appears to have retained his humility. He was entrusted with the protection of the Son of God, and yet he is hardly mentioned in Scripture. We do not know of his death except by his absence at the foot of the Cross, when Christ places His Mother Mary under the protection of St John. Tradition indicates that he died before Christ’s public ministry began.

In the Apostle Paul, we see one who had been given a great mission and a great role in the church of Jesus Christ, but Paul never forgot who he was and what he had been. He spoke of himself as the least of the apostles and the least of the saints because he had persecuted the church. At one point, he even referred to himself as the greatest of sinners. He understood that but for the grace of God, he would have suffered the wrath of God. But he did not allow this to immobilize him in a sea of despair. He rejoiced in God's grace and faithfully did what Jesus had called him to do.

Let us pray for **Humility**

Lord God, help us to be humble and gracious, in every interaction patient, loving and kind. We humble ourselves before you Lord, for we are nothing without you.

Amen

Thursday Prayer

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

In our Intercessions today we pray for –

The Worldwide work of the Mothers' Union and our worldwide president Sheran Harper, our chief executive Bev Julian and all who work in Mary Sumner House. Our province of Canterbury and Kathryn Anderson, our Provincial President. For our Diocesan President Hazel Williams and Trustees and all task group leaders and MU members and all Clergy within the Ely Diocese.

In our Worldwide Links of the Mothers' Union we pray for:- Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnager in India; plus diocese to diocese with Kigali and Velore.

Our Wave of Prayer today is for Bukavu in Democratic Republic of Congo, Nyahururu in Kenya; Gboko in Nigeria; Portsmouth in England and New Guinea Islands in Papua New Guinea.

For our many blessings.

And anyone known to us who is ill or unwell. **Pause**

We pray for countries around the world where there are troubles and people are suffering and dying in wars and conflict.

For the world we live in, that God may open our eyes to recognise the goodness of all creation and help us to do what we can to restore and care for the wonderful gift that we have been given.

And finally Lord, help us to do the work you have appointed to us. To start and to see it through, so that everything we do is to your glory and that you may find it pleasing in your sight. **Amen**

ALL: Lord's Prayer

**Our Father Who art in Heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done;
On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen**

“For if you forgive others the wrongs they have done, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done” Matthew 6 vs 14

All Stand for our Hymn “O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness”

**O Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience and incense of lowliness.
Kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.**

**Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
High on his heart he will bear it for you,
Comfort your sorrows and answer your prayerfulness,
Guiding your steps in the way that is true.**

**Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
Of the poor wealth you would count as your own;
Truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness
These are the offerings to bring to his throne.**

**These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
He will accept for the name that is dear;
Mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
Trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.**

**O Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.**

**ALL - Lord, our hearts praise you, our souls are glad because you are our Saviour,
because you have remembered us, your servants, because you have shown mercy to
all who honour you. We praise you because of all the great things you have done for
us. Help us to follow the calling you have for us as St Joseph did in his heart and
mind. Amen**

All - The Mary Sumner Prayer

**All this day O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee, and every life I
touch. Do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I
breathe or the life I live. Amen**

All Stand for the Grace –

**May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy
Spirit be with us all now and forever more. Amen**