



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
- SUNDAY 1 APRIL 2018

## **Christ is risen**

He is Risen, indeed!! May we, with joy, rise to the occasion. Let there be no grudging niceness, but a new frame of mind, a fresh appreciation of God's wonderful love for us all. Happy, yes. Content, yes. Complacent, not a bit of it. We have new life in Christ so we can bear witness to his love, and be his hands and feet and heart in the world. Let us go out on a limb, stretching our spiritual muscle, loving bravely for Christ.

*Jesus said to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.' John 11:25-6*

Mothers' Union members in Ghana place faith at the centre of their ministry. Their Easter faith inspires them to run retreats, initiate Bible study groups and programmes of community action. A recent drive was to increase awareness of adolescent reproductive health. The whole community was targeted: a witness to Christ's Resurrection power to bring new life to all.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
- SUNDAY 8 APRIL 2018

## **Listening**

Listening is an art. It requires dedication, attention to detail and a sense of purpose. And most importantly of all it requires Love. God said, 'Listen to Him.' With new life in Christ our dedication is more fervent, our attention keener, and our purpose more grounded. Love, though, requires our listening to be selfless. Our Easter self is less 'I' than before. 'Listen with the ear of the heart' St Benedict.

*Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'this is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Mark 9:7*

Listening to people in deep and dire need in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mothers' Union members aim to offer peace and comfort. They are dedicated to bringing Jesus' words to those in the midst of endemic sexual violence and domestic violence. Let us pray for their work of restoring hope to the desperate, healing the traumatised and trying to reduce violence.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
- SUNDAY 15 APRIL 2018

## **Servanthood**

Jesus did something that no Jewish man would do, washing his friends' feet – far too grotty and far too up close and personal. And this was meant to be an identifying witness action for his followers! Are we expected to go against convention to follow his example? But we all know people who put themselves out of their comfort zone (that's key to following Jesus' example) for example, to help at the drop in centre, visit the prison. Me too, Lord?

*So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' John 13: 14-5*

Mothers' Union members in Papua New Guinea are seeking to turn the tide on the negative effects of gender-based violence. They work on projects to educate men on shared responsibility and mutual respect in the hope of lowering domestic violence levels. Two thirds of women are affected. Let us thank God for their commitment to follow Jesus' example of servanthood.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
- SUNDAY 22 APRIL 2018

## **Town and country**

In Australia there's tough country and good country and a lot of red dirt; there's land for mining, and mountains for skiing. There are a handful of cities, and lots of towns, big and little. It is what it is. We are under God who, we pray, will grant us the grace to be tolerant of the other, and gratitude for the peace and richness of our lives whether in town or country.

*Trust in the land and do good: and you shall dwell in the land and feed in safe pastures. Psalm 37: 3*

Mother's Union in Tanzania thanks God for his guidance and protection. They feel their work in building and renovating churches and clergy housing has strengthened marriage and family life within those communities. Church and Mothers' Union numbers have increased. We offer our prayers for their conference and strategic planning in September.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 29 APRIL 2018

## Fullness of Life

Abundant life: is it lots of holidays, lots of friends, lots of entertainment, the latest live show, lots of cricket ...? Consider abundant life as an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Now, that means something quite different: not so much of the 'lots' and 'latest' and more appreciation of the simple gifts: treasured time with children, music, garden. Silence, reading, walking. Being with God, preparing to meet your maker ... Abundant life. What a gift!

*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10: 10b*

In Guyana, Rita became the first woman, and first indigenous woman to be ordained. She is an active Mothers' Union member and a facilitator of their Worldwide Parenting Programme which works across Guyana. Mothers' Union is very proud of her and the fruit of her full life, one of which is Rita's translating the Bible into her indigenous language for the benefit of her people. Suriname has a small group which meets regularly for prayers and fellowship.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 6 MAY 2018

## Vision

*"Truth sees God, wisdom beholds God and from these comes a third, a holy wondering delight in God, which is love."* In these words Mother Julian of Norwich has given us an insight into the gifts the Christian life has in store for those who seek after Truth, pray for Wisdom and receive that inward vision of delight, which is the companionship of our brother, Jesus.

*Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. Acts 1:11*

In Kenya Mothers' Union has a vision that the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs both young and old to work together for social transformation. The leaders at a workshop looked at reconciliation with God, self and others. Let us thank God for their vision which seeks to equip leaders to minister in prayer and gifts, serving and engaging others within their reach.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 13 MAY 2018

## Testing of faith

Today our faith is constantly in danger of seduction by affluence and safety. If we think our lives should be risk and trauma free, and we deserve what we have, there is little opportunity for facing our mortality or giving thanks to God. It is only by looking at life as God's gift that we build the maturity and strength in faith to endure. *He did not say, "You shall not be tempest tossed, you shall not be work-weary, you shall not be discomforted." But he said, "You shall not be overcome." God wants us to heed these words so that we shall always be strong in trust, both in sorrow and joy. Julian of Norwich*

*My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4*

Mothers' Union and the Anglican Church are now seen as major drivers of positive change in communities all over Burundi. Sesema was lonely and unhappy; she joined the Literacy and Financial Education Program. Now she can read and write and is able to send her children to school. We offer our prayers and thanksgiving for the givers and receivers of aid, that many need no longer beg but have learnt the skills to provide for their families.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 20 MAY 2018

## Power of the Spirit

Christianity is such a bodily religion. St Paul, our first theologian tried to explain the church in terms of our body parts. Just breathing is a constant reminder of God's Spirit. As the wind of Pentecost filled the early Christians with energy and love, so are we. Breathe in, in prayer, breathe out the power of the Holy Spirit to smile at the stranger, love those who we disagree with. That is Power, indeed!

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to all the ends of the earth. Acts 1: 8*

In the power of the Spirit members in Uganda (with the support of the Archbishop) have led a programme of activities celebrating family life. Look at the photo in *Families Worldwide* and see their PP wielding a spade cleaning up a yard. The Spirit moves us in many and varied directions. Mothers' Union has 25 thousand members in a population of just under 38 ½ million. Please pray, with them, for unity in the body of Christ.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 27 MAY 2018

## **Peace and Reconciliation**

Many of us have such deep and hurtful conflicts in our lives. International conflicts pass across our television and newspapers, even mobile phones. Prayer diaries from Mothers' Union and mission agencies have reports that are more disturbing because our sisters are there at the coalface. Contemplate God who is 'the author of peace and lover of concord' each day and pray for peace in trust.

*For in Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Colossians 1: 19-20*

Mothers' Union in Angola is lobbying the government to enforce domestic violence legislation. Members continue to reach out to and visit the sick, needy, widows and orphans, and provide families in need with pots, food, clothes and other item. They work not only in the church but in the community.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 3 JUNE 2018

## **Celebrating volunteers**

He said: Freely, freely, you have received  
Freely, freely give.

The reward for the Christian volunteer is not that it feels good to do help without being paid but that it is doing God's will. God is generous, God gives us gifts, not the least of which is Life itself. To give freely, is freedom, it is a gift turned back on itself. God's 'service is perfect freedom' and an unexpected source of peace and happiness. Alleluia!

*A generous person will be enriched, and the one who gives water will get water. Proverbs 11: 25*

In rural Thailand Mothers' Union has opened up preschools. After a year parents have reported that there have been changes in their children's lives. They now eat and sleep well, have friends, sing, and have developed language skills. The children are happy and healthy and so are their parents! Let us freely give our prayers and support to these members and those they care for.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 10 JUNE 2018

## **Creator God**

Being aware of, believing in, God as the creator, can make all the difference to how we ARE in the world. If we believe that God 'hates nothing that he has made', then we ought to do likewise. If we believe that 'God alone works great marvels', then we need take no great pride in OUR works but give thanks to him who gave us the gifts. All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. Revelation 4: 11*

Let us give thanks for the two faithful Mothers' Union members who help transform a part of Madagascar known as 'the village of fools.' The story related in *Families Worldwide* is so wonderful that it is put on the website. The transformation is an example of the creative power of God working through the witnesses of Christ's redeeming love in the power of the Holy Spirit.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 17 JUNE 2018

## **Parenting**

The intergenerational care of children is one of the victims of modern life. It is too often the poor, the marginalized, those who have been in prison, who have had little opportunity to learn parenting skills or even have had good parenting themselves. Let us pray for guidance in our vocation of promoting parenting. May God raise up in Mothers' Union those who are able to guide and strengthen needy parents.

*Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity and sound speech. Titus 2: 7-8a*

Doing the cooking for a monthly meal is a Mothers' Union member in Morant Bay. The less fortunate and homeless are fed with donations from branch members and funds from a thrift shop. This is one of the programmes in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands where members offer family support to the sick. By counselling young mothers and young church-goers, members are taking on parenting roles.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA  
SUNDAY 24 JUNE 2018

## **Welcoming the Stranger**

Many of us live in a very closed and suspicious world. Stranger danger is no longer just a caution for children. Locked gates and high fences are part of many suburban streets and country towns. Jesus exhorts us to meet HIM in the stranger, the prisoner, the hungry, the refugee. Jesus knew the horror of being forced to flee his homeland, and the danger of alienation in his own country. As we welcome the stranger, we welcome our Lord and Saviour.

*Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13: 1-2*

Mothers' Union is going Green in South Africa. They're committed to promoting the use of local resources and sustainable livelihood methods – and helping combat the effects of climate change. They also run Bible studies which value nature, organise nature walks and support the creation of permaculture gardens. All this and members continue to care pastorally in their communities.