



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 2 JANUARY 2022

Time for transformation

Although it's the beginning of a New Year, the real reason of the season is the wonder of Christ's birth. The gospel writers shout from the rooftops that glory shines in human form. Charles Wesley wrote that Jesus was 'born to give us second birth'. You may suddenly become aware of yourself, who you really are. We are never too old or set in our ways to break open our hearts.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Mothers' Union members worldwide are called to look to the future with fresh vision. God's love in the life of Christ, human and divine, transformed the world. Loving, welcoming and accepting congregations transform the church.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 9 JANUARY 2022

A new triennium

Mothers' Union runs on a three-year cycle. Mary Sumner's organisational skills encourage refreshment of personnel and ideas. In any organisation a new order will stir the dust and ruffle feathers. Of course not everything 'new' is salvation guaranteed; not everything old is worthless. When we subject our capacity to work, minister and serve to the guidance of God's loving spirit, we will grow in love and understanding.

All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

We hold before God the Mothers' Union trustees, remembering especially Pamela Abana, who begins her term as a trustee. We especially pray for her people suffering civil unrest in the Solomons Islands, and we pray for all members of our faith communities striding out in faith, hope and love.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 16 JANUARY 2022

Transforming the church

When you think, ‘they should/shouldn’t, the church ought to, if only there were...’, the incredibly painful answer is that ‘I should, I ought to, if only I were’. The miracle of that turnaround IS the transformation Jesus called his disciples to and it’s no different today. Every time we hold back on condemning another, every time WE personally make a move towards one who others hold in contempt, then every time the Church is transformed. No business plan can evaluate love.

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John: 13: 34-35

We thank God for the ministry of Mothers’ Union in South Sudan where safe spaces for survivors of gender-based violence are created and participants are transformed by love and become of pool of educated and sensitized people able to give to their communities.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 23 JANUARY 2022

Mothers’ Union worldwide

*Jesus bids us shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.*

From the beginning of his ministry Jesus reached out into the corners of his world: into the mire of political double dealing with Matthew the tax collector, to those excluded by religious and racial bigotry – the sick and maimed, the Canaanite ‘dogs’. They were struggling to survive in their small corner and Jesus opened a way of life that makes ALL things new. For Christ each small corner is a beacon of community love, for we are the Body of Christ.

And the one who was seated on the throne said, See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Revelation 21:5

We pray this week for the Anglican diocese of False Bay, South Africa. Its bishop is Margaret Vertue, the second woman to be elected as a bishop of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and of the whole African continent. Margaret was educated at the Convent of the Holy Family in Kimberley and studied at St Paul’s Theological College, Grahamstown (now the College of the Transfiguration), at Stellenbosch University and at St Beuno’s, North Wales. She was ordained as one of the first woman priests by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in September 1992, elected bishop on 3 October 2012 and consecrated on 19 January 2013 by the Most Reverend Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 30 JANUARY 2022

Using God's resources

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Psalm 24 give a lyrical touch to Creation Theology, but the meaning remains clear: if the earth, the universe is God's and of God's making, we are duty bound to respect it. We too are created beings. We share the same created substance and we are bound to SHARE the resources with our fellow creatures. Let us not be like spoilt children at a party – demanding satisfaction, the good life.

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. Isaiah 58:10

We are asked to pray for Mothers' Union in Burundi where a project focusses on women who are sole providers for themselves and their families. Facilitators share their skills so participants have a chance to move from ignorance and poverty to positions of informed leadership and financial confidence.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2022

Working in partnership

A ship's mast passes through a hole in the deck, but there is a frame (a partner) which serves both to strengthen the deck and relieve the strain. Wherever we are and whatever we, all of us, do for the glory of God, we need advice, support and encouragement as well as acceptance of who we are and what gifts we have to offer.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a

Mothers' Union members participate in the 16 days of action against Intimate Family Violence, being a partner voice and a Christian witness. The nativity set which travels around a country town, from the school bus to the butcher shop, witnesses to the imagination of its MU members. It helps to strengthen community life and brings Christianity into an ever-increasing commercial Christmas. This must relieve the strain on any families self-conscious about relating the Christmas story. May we all be partners in strengthening timid souls and relieving the strain of self-centred living.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2022

Transforming lives

Christian history is crammed full of those who have been instrumental in transforming lives. And Jesus is the model for this transformative power. He TOUCHED people, literally and figuratively. From a baby born in straitened circumstances to a 'king' on a donkey and a cross, he shocked his followers and his enemies. Transformation is always risky. We feel that in our bones as every challenge is faced, for our own transformation is the basis of any transformation we may desire for others. Whatever we have in mind, let us pray for amazing grace to guide us.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:3

We are asked to pray for the diocese of Dornakal in the Church of South India. Give thanks for the diocesan school which officially re-opened at the end of October after a two year lockdown. Eighteen pupils came on the first day and each week the numbers have been increasing. There are now 60 pupils and more families are enquiring about places.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2022

Fair Trade

Shopping can be such a trial. Dashing around the supermarket leaves little chance to consider where the tea comes from, how the workers are paid or what appalling damage coffee growing can cause the natural environment. There are also dilemmas buying clothes such as the exploitation of workers and our predilection for 'fast fashion'. We can help balance the scales by sourcing ethical alternatives.

Honest balances and scales are the Lord s; all the weights in the bag are his work. Proverbs 16:11

We are asked to pray for the church in Mandalay, Myanmar. As the country opens to tourists, the exploitation of women and minors is evident. Women and girls roll cheroots (cigars) under guard and orphans housed and 'employed' to paint figurines. Seven young men wait in the early morning to help with luggage of two hotel clients, hopeful of a tip. Loving God, we travel at the expense of others' lives and buy the goods to ease our conscience. Forgive us although we know they need us.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2022

Women at prayer

"**All desires know**': this phrase has always evoked in me that distinctive stance which I associate with authentic worship: namely, an appalled sense of self-exposure combined with a curious but profound relief, and so to write under this title has been both a discipline and a comfort. I have chosen it because I understand the Christian life to be about the integration of desire: our personal desires, our political vision, and our longing for God. So far from being in competition with one another, I believe that our deepest desires ultimately spring from the same source: and worship is the place where this can be acknowledged." Janet Morley Preface to *All Desire Known* SPCK 1988, Expanded Edition 1992.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

'O God our dance, in whom we live and move and have our being: so direct our strength and inspire our weakness that we may enter with power into the movement of your whole creation, through our partner, Jesus Christ, **Amen.**' Morley, *All Desires Known*. 1992, blessing, p. 87.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2021

Women of influence

In the gospel according to St John, it is Martha of Bethany who declares Jesus to be the Messiah, thus claiming for the women around Jesus, for all time, the gift of spiritual knowledge and influence. Make room this Lent, to discover women of influence in Christian history. Try an internet search for the women mentioned in the prayer book calendar, borrow a book or two. Think about Martha, our fore-mother in faith, loved by Jesus along with her sister and brother. And remember how loved you are.

Martha said to Jesus, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." John 11: 27

Let us pray for our local parish and give hearty thanks for the ministry of all women, especially those in Holy Orders. Ponder Jesus's love for the Bethany family. Give thanks for those women who have influenced your Christian faith and growth as a child of God.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 13 MARCH 2022

Women worldwide

How might we react to being accosted for help by a total stranger – and especially one who is so obviously not of our faith? Perhaps in theory we may be unfazed, but in reality might not the dirt, the garments, prove a bridge too far? The impact of the biblical account of an unbeliever accosting Jesus and asking for his help on his contemporaries is hard to take in. After all the Canaanite woman does call herself a dog. Jesus' ministry embraced ALL people as must ours.

Then Jesus answered her, Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Matthew 15: 28

Mothers' Union spread across the world in the wake of the British Empire. Sheran Harper is the first non-British worldwide president. Sheran comes from South American republic Guyana. It was formerly British Guiana and part of the Caribbean and is still part of the British Commonwealth. Christianity is the dominant religion. There are also a minority of Hindu and Muslim migrants from India and some traditional African and Amerindian folk beliefs. We hold Sheran in our prayers and thank God for her.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 20 MARCH 2022

Women of faith

This week members of Mothers' Union observe Lady Day – the Feast of the Annunciation to Mary, surely the most honoured of women of faith. There are SO many names of faithful women and yet the gospel account of a woman Jesus commends for what she has done, leaves her Nameless. She is to be remembered for anointing His Body. She is to be remembered for her act of devotion to the Lord of Lords. Faith is not to be defined by either actions or prayer, faith is rather a state of being which responds – whatever that response may be.

She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her. Mark 14: 8-9

'O God, you fulfil our desire beyond what we can bear: as Mary gave her appalled assent to your intimate promise, so may we open ourselves also to contain your life within us, through Jesus Christ, Amen.' Morley, Collect for the Annunciation. *All Desires Known* 1992. P. 26.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 27 MARCH 2022

Mothering

Care, guidance, nurture: these motherly qualities are desirable in all human beings. There's nothing soft, weak or soppy about them for each of those qualities demand strength of character and the ability to self-reflect and make adequate decisions. It is said that being able to think ahead is a sign of maturity: it is an essential attribute in caring for a child. It is also needed for ministry, which is, in many senses, a mothering role. Think of getting up at night to attend the bedside of the dying or of dropping everything for an emergency or a mediating a family grievance, hearing confessions, life stories, complaints, and stories of abuse....

How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! Luke 13:34

Let us give thanks for our Fathers and Mothers in God. Let us commend them to God's care and keeping. Let us pray especially for Mothers' Union as it mothers worldwide.