

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK
ANGLICAN MOTHERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA



January to March 2023

Have you ever asked yourself “Who rules the world? Is it the political leaders of the day?”

It’s actually those who pray in accordance with God’s will. Those are the most significant citizens, though often poor, invisible, sick and unknown they are working out God’s purposes in the world.

But that can be feel overwhelming because you think your prayers are so weak and your prayer life so thin. And if your relationship with God is measured by your prayers, then it’s not so good.

But prayer is the essential means of placing our faith in Jesus.

We pray not because our prayers are good, or wise or powerful but because the one to whom our prayers are addressed is all those things. He is able to answer prayers that come from mixed motives, confused thinking and anxious weak faith.

As we start this new year let us pray that the Lord will unite us in prayer.

Christine Jensen (Prayer and Spirituality Coordinator)

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday January 1, 2023

United in Prayer

'May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (*Romans 15:5,6*).

Isn't it painful when friends or family fall out and refuse to talk with each other?

The Bible tells us that if we wish God to hear our prayers, we need to forgive each other as he has forgiven us even though at times this is hard. Especially amongst Christians, we are to think of each other with the grace of God and join together 'with one mind and one voice'.

Question for thought: Am I in unity with my sisters and brothers so that together we may pray?

Gracious Lord, we pray for Sheran Harper and the Worldwide Trustees particularly Pamela Abana Trustee of Zone C (Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Australia, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea). May she have wisdom in her relationships across the Zone as she supports and encourages the different provinces.

AMUA Prayer and Spirituality Coordinator

Christine Jensen OAM

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Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 26th March, 2023

Women as peacemakers

‘The mid-wives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live’ (*Exodus 1:17*).

Have you ever wondered about whether you would have courage to do the right thing in extreme circumstances? The king of Egypt was all-powerful. His command could not be disobeyed with impunity. In this case his command to the midwives was to commit murder by killing all the Israelite baby boys. But they feared God more than the Pharaoh and let the boys live. They worked for the good of others and created peace where there could have been endless blood.

Question: Do I strive for peace and justice in my relationships?

Almighty God, we pray for the Mothers Union in Madagascar as they act as ‘agents of change’ in the lives of women who in turn, have now become agents of change for their communities. May they share the love of Jesus as they care for the many needs people are facing.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday January 8, 2023

United in Vision

‘And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith’ (*Hebrews 12:1,2*).

You may know what it is like to live with a bride who can think of nothing else but the wedding day. But we are all the same – once we have great goal we can think of little else. For Christians, our goal is Jesus. We want to please Him now, we want to be like Him, and we want to live for ever with Him. The Lord Jesus is the vision which unites us. We fix our eyes on Him.

Question for thought: Am I living for and by Jesus?

Let us pray for the Outgate project in Mauritius which supports female prisoners in prison as well as their families who remain outside. Each family receives a small sum of money each month and is visited by Mothers Union too. This helps keep contact between the children and mother. Mothers Union also provides prison mentors for female prisoners.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday January 15, 2023

United in Christ

‘There is neither Jew or Gentile, neither slave or free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (*Galatians 3:28*).

It is good to be a loyal person, true to friends and family. We like people who like us and we like people who are like us. But the wonderful thing about what God has done through Jesus is that he has united people with all sorts of differences of gender, status and culture. We are to treat each other as equals in him and love and care for each other.

Question for thought: Does my church welcome strangers?

Please pray for the improvement in the lives of girls, women and families in Uganda. Mothers Union is gaining momentum in Uganda now and there are 21,500 members already. May they be assured of the hope they have in Christ.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 19th March, , 2023

Biblical role models

‘I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also’ (*2 Timothy 1:5*).

I sometimes ask friends which teacher had the biggest influence on them and why. We sometimes forget that the real answer is likely to be our parents. Timothy was one of Paul’s closest associates and is famous to this day for his work for Jesus. But notice how he came to know the Lord and be shaped: it was through two godly women, his mother and grandmother. Again and again I notice the powerful effects of grandmothers in influencing the lives of the next generations. The role model for girls and boys could hardly be more powerful – and of course not merely for children. We model Christ amongst our friends and in our community.

Question for thought: Am I showing the Christian life to those around me?

Gracious Lord, we give thanks for the many members in Brisbane Diocese. Pray for Jenny Bullock and the Executive as they continue to reach out to their communities. May members of Mothers Union groups continue to be companions to each other and strive to share God’s love in all of their relationships and interactions.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 12th March, 2023

Women's influence in the world

'Do whatever he tells you' (*John 2:5*).

Obedience can be deadly. All sorts of crimes have been done because of obedience. I guess that it all depends on what we are being commanded to do and most importantly who is the person giving the order. Mary the mother of Jesus, knew Jesus as no one else did. He had obeyed her as a child. Now she told the servants at the feast to obey him when they ran out of wine. She pointed to Jesus and changed the wedding feast from disaster to success. The heart of our influence is our own obedience to him and the way in which we point others to him as well.

Question: Am I aiming to please Jesus in all things?

Father, we pray for the situation in South Africa. Be with those who are victims of violence and the looting. Protect those who are fearful. We pray for those who do not have access to food and transport due to the violence. May they know you care for them.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday January 22, 2023

United in Mission

'Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel' (*Philippians 1:27*).

I love working on a team, doing some great project. We are more effective and we draw together, and have stories to tell afterwards. The greatest of all our projects is to share the truth of the gospel with those who don't know Jesus. We are bound to do this as individuals, but it is wonderful when we engage in sharing the glad tidings together.

Question for thought: Do we strive as one for the faith of the gospel?

Heavenly Father, we bring before you members in Bathurst Diocese NSW many of whom have suffered in the past year due to severe floods. May they know that you are their comfort and strength, and may they receive the help and support they need.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 29th January, 2023

Self-sufficiency

'We love because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19).

I smiled within myself when my children fell in love as adults. They changed. Love does that – it transforms us, especially when we know that we are loved. We do not deserve God's love. He loves us, unworthy as we are, and as a result we love him and those around us. To be loved by God is to be a new person. When are we self sufficient? When we know that the love we have for others comes from his love for us.

Question for thought: Am I so gripped by the grace of God that I love others?

Lord of all, we pray for the affiliated Mothers Union members in North Kerala in South India as they face many challenges particularly the education of children and the training of women in income giving skills.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 5th March, 2023

Inspiring women

'Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.' (John 20:18).

There are so many inspiring women in the Bible! For example, there is Mary Magdalene, chosen by the Lord to be one of the very first witnesses to his resurrection. She does not hesitate. Having recognised the Lord and seeing that he was not a ghost, but truly resurrected from the dead, she rushes to testify. The Lord reveals himself to her, a relatively unimportant person, to bear the news of a miracle that changed the whole world. She inspires us, whatever our insignificance in human terms, to be available to be used by God.

Question: Do I trust God to use me to work out his purposes in the world?

Heavenly Father, we pray for an end to conflict in South Sudan amongst tribal groups and terrorists. May there be wisdom in providing both immediate emergency relief and long-term development programs to help bring back hope to families in this troubled country.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 26th February, 2023

Woman as advocates

'If I perish, I perish' (*Esther 4:16*).

These are the words of Queen Esther. Her people, the Jews, were about to be slaughtered by royal decree. Could she intervene? Only by risking her own life, for to approach the throne without invitation, even for the Queen, was a capital offence unless the King had mercy. But she knew that God was in charge of all things and that she could trust him. With courage born of faith she addressed the king and saved God's people.

Question: Am I courageous enough to do God's will even in the face of opposition or danger?

Grafton Diocese is still feeling the effects of the floods in 2022. Dear God, we give you grateful thanks for all those people who over the past year have come forward to help in so many ways and for the Anglicare North Coast team for their superb work.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 5th February, 2023

Partnership

'Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister' (*1 John 4:21*).

What do you think God uses to keep us faithful to him? One of the chief means is our fellowship or partnership with our fellow believers. Mothers Union is a wonderful experience of such partnership. But local churches are amazing. They give us partners in the service of Christ. They are models for the world around them how God wants us to live as humans. When churches decline or disappear, the community as a whole suffers a big loss. When they flourish in the way they should, marked by love received from God and displayed to others, they are powerful signs of the work of God.

Question for thought: Does my church display the love of God?

Gracious Lord, we pray for the Christians in Marsabit, Kenya. We pray for an end to the conflict between the Islamist terrorist groups and the Christian Church. We pray for Elema Molu Dida who leads the Mothers Union and for the desperate need for microfinance to help support vulnerable women.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 12th February, 2023

Tools of transformation

‘For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works so that no one can boast (*Ephesians 2:9*).

Did you realise that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded by Christian believers? Of course, that is only one of the great revolutionary actions which have been motivated by faith. When we trust God, we are set free to do good – not so that we may be saved, but because we are already saved. As Jesus said, faith can move mountains (*Mark 11:23*). The greatest tool of transformation in the world is faith in the gospel message of Jesus. From that comes the abundance of good works that changes the world.

Question for thought: Am I trusting Jesus and does this show in the life I live for him?

Heavenly Father, we pray for the Mothers Union of the Diocese of Morogoro in Tanzania. May the Umaki women work to empower and equip women with economic, spiritual, and relational skills, so that they will become strong Christian mothers and leaders.

Thought for the Week from Mothers Union Australia

Sunday 19th February, 2023

Fair Trade

‘For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do’ (*Ephesians 2:10*).

Ros is a dear friend of mine who has given years of her life to the Fair Trade movement. Why does she do this? She knows and teaches just how many people are exploited in the production of goods and how unjust this is. She cannot change everything in a sinful world, but she seeks and finds the good works which God has prepared for her to walk in and as a result teaches many of us what is happening. She is a blessing to others around the world. We can all do such things.

Question for thought: Why don’t I pray each day that God will help me find and do the good works which he has prepared for me to walk in?

Gracious Lord, we bring before you the situation in Myanmar and especially pray for the Diocese of Mandalay. Please sustain the members as they face many difficulties politically and personally. May your Spirit enable them to have courage and protect them from oppression.