



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

SUNDAY 4 JULY 2021

justice and mercy

It can cause all sorts of trouble when people get the wrong end of the stick and words such as ‘justice’ and ‘mercy’, are prime examples. They are used in the Bible used to describe God; in our culture they are what we want when we are victims of an injustice or when we have done wrong. Of course, language is an ever-changing tool but if we are to be just and merciful ourselves then we must try to understand these attributes of God as presented in Scripture. Mercy (*hesed*), loving-kindness (KJV) is God’s tender forbearance of frail humanity. Justice is about right relationship between God and humans, humans with each other, all brought about by God’s grace.

Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. Isaiah 30:18

Mothers’ Union members, pray to be just and merciful as God is just and merciful. This may mean changing your approach – less asking and more listening, less about me and more about others. ‘Draw us through the narrowest of gates to the wide open space of the promise.’ Psalm 106 *Out of the Silence ... Into the Silence* by Jim Cotter. Cairns Publications, Harlech, 2006. P. 315 Used with permission.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

SUNDAY 11 JULY 2021

blessings

Some call it serendipity, others good luck, chance, a fluke, but writer Charles Williams calls it *the groundwork of the Omnipotence*. When we acknowledge God’s blessings in our daily lives, we humble ourselves. In the culture of the great ‘I am’, such humility is counter intuitive. We think great thoughts, make important decisions and forget that ‘God alone workest great marvels’. How mightily are we tempted? How easily does our ego insinuate upon the blessings? Dear God, ‘pour upon us the continual dew of thy blessing.’ *A Prayer for Clergy and People in Morning Prayer. Book of Common Prayer 1662*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Ephesians 1:3

In Rwanda a bishop's wife recognised a problem and set up a sewing program. Rigger Mothers' Union in Wales set up a fundraiser for more sewing machines. What blessings from God!



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 18 JULY 2021

Faith in action

Martin Luther seems to have been a one-track person. One track was that we are saved by 'faith alone'. And although he also taught that the Bible was the only source of inspiration/knowledge about God, he was not happy about the Letter of James and wanted it removed from the canon of Scripture (see quotation below). Every one of us goes off on a tangent about something. Not one of us knows it all. The best we can is to be A Christian: carrying Christ in our hearts and minds as we encounter the Christ in others and take action, in faith. 'When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?'

But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. James 2:18

Our Polynesian neighbours in Tonga have had Mothers' Union for over 60 years. Let us pray for the 60 members there and take action to connect with them.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 25 JULY 2021

Health and healing

'A healthy mind in a healthy body' or 'as long as you've got your health': what are we thinking when we say these things? Perhaps our minds govern our bodies. Perhaps health is the clue to Salvation. The psalmist seems to be saying that God does not abandon us even though Judaism did teach that sickness was a punishment from God for sin. Isaiah prophesied that the God 'makes weal and creates woe'. Isaiah 45:6. We are flawed humanity and we worship God the Creator and endeavour not to make idols of our bodies or our minds.

The Lord sustains them on their sickbed; in their illness you heal all their infirmities Psalm 41:3

Mothers' Union in Canada is committed to assisting parents and all who care for children to do one of the most important jobs in the world – to bring up healthy children in healthy families. Their program is called Parents Supporting Parents. It's all about building positive relationships in families. It's about exploring communication – talking and listening. It's a program for every family.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 1 AUGUST 2021

Time to rest

We often talk about 'time' and 'rest' as if they were our possession, our right, what we've earned; or what are denied us, been taken away or thwarted. Similarly, when time and rest are forced upon us, as in lockdown, we are at a loss. The usual distractions and tasks are forbidden and despair sets in. This is a heavy burden indeed and whatever the economics/personality/relationships, Jesus says to 'learn' from him and 'find rest for your souls'. What we do about 'time' and 'rest' is a spiritual issue and requires us to reassess our priorities, contemplate God's goodness and expect to spend more time seeing God's wonderful works and resting confidently in Jesus's love and teaching.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11: 28-29

We are asked this week to pray for Mothers' Union in Melbourne where the Covid pestilence has brought suffering and resentment. As we give thanks to God for their Christian witness, may members be strengthened in prayer and learning and gain in confidence and loving care.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 8 AUGUST 2021

Mothers' union vision

Mothers' Union flourishes in countries where many women and children are culturally marginalized and often whole communities are transformed. May God's love quicken the spirit of members in more privileged countries. May the vision of a better life for desperate families lead to members touching as many lives as possible.

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. Ps 100: 5

In our prayers for the diocese of North West Australia this week, let us pray especially for Australia's First Nation People. As traditional family practices have broken down, pray for guidance in how to show God's love.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 15 AUGUST 2021

youthfulness

Many of us hate being older, losing the spring our step or the fresh, unwrinkled face of our youth. We live in an age-ist society. The young have no regard for our opinions. These are the thoughts that dig us deeper into exhaustion and weariness. Isaiah's vision tells us, in poetic language, of the FREEDOM that can be experienced by a relationship with God, by 'waiting on God'. The metaphorical Youthfulness is within our reach. Apply Within.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:30-31

This week we pray for Toungoo Diocese in Myanmar, where there are a number of Karen churches and a theological college. The Karens are a persecuted minority in Myanmar. We pray God's blessing at this difficult and dangerous time.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 22 AUGUST 2021

Praying with a purpose

We can purposely sit down, in a certain chair, at a designated time – with a heart and mind OPEN. To have an open heart and mind requires purpose. We are, when it comes down to it, mere mortals. We dare not tell God what to do. We can ask, but God knows what we need before we ask, and besides our children for whom we pray are responsible for themselves before God. We can ask for guidance. Then we just need to listen, pick up the cues, really believe! And have the courage to respond. And have the grace to see God at work in the most incredible ways.

you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. 2 Corinthians 1:11

This week we pray for our Pacific neighbours on Guadalcanal in the Solomons Islands. We hold all our sisters and brothers in our mind's eye and heart's care, especially those suffering domestic

violence. We remember the Provincial President, Pamela Obana, thanking God for her gifts and faith.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 29 AUGUST 2021

New seasons

The change from Winter to Spring in much of Australia is not dramatic. Rather the new season emerges in much the same way as our lives change, sometimes a ‘small drama’, as when a child leaves home. Sometimes the change into a new season is prolonged and painful as with a partner who moves into care. If we are to live faithfully, we need to temper our expectations. We cannot plan a new season to order but with God’s help we can look for the chances of new life in the changes of our fleeting world.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore. Psalm 121:7-8

Let us thank God for members in the diocese of Wangaratta as they greet another Southern Hemisphere Spring and continue their involvement with local parish and community life.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2021

Teaching and learning

Charles Dickens saw social injustice in Victorian England on a huge scale – firsthand - and did his best to right the wrongs. When he wrote his wonderful novels, he believed that education would solve the problem, would lift people out of the mire and save his nation. Mothers’ Union does vital work in promoting the education of women and girls. But humanity is not saved by learning alone, nor by business management, nor Our real life needs Soul food, Self-examination and Sincerity.

Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life. Proverbs 4:13

The 2020 Report on International Religious Freedoms states that “In South Sudan in July, a local militia in Jonglei State attacked an Anglican church compound, killing 31 persons, including the church’s dean and 14 women and children.” Hear our prayers, Lord.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

Seedtime and harvest

The weather, the mice, the grasshoppers – so much depends on chance for the sowers and reapers, the planters, pruners and pickers. Our lives, too, are subject to chance: whether we were travelling on a cruise ship at the beginning of the Covid pandemic or born near Bethlehem in 30AD to a family of shepherds or near a creekbed in Central Australia in 1863 or 1963 or 2003. Let us carefully examine the seeds of our Christian life. Let us rejoice in the harvest and plant the fruits of God's gifts wisely and with abundant generosity.

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 2 Corinthians 9:10

St Alban's Cathedral, Pretoria has a unique placement amongst the institutions of government. Members of the congregation will walk a prayer labyrinth at designated times through the precincts which house the offices of decision-makers and government technocrats whose decisions and work impact on the whole of the nation, the walkers upholding and supporting the workers in Prayer.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2021

Peace and security

Fear may be the most crippling experience of all. Certainly the gospels are continually advocating the importance of trust in the wake of fearful times ahead. In John, chapters 13-15, Jesus prepares his friends for the Way. It is the Way of Trust and Love, of the New Commandment. He does not promise peace without conflict, nor security without attack. What he does promise is His peace which passes all understanding. We live in world of sin and death but we Trust and Love and are saved, not from the results of sin and death but from the fear of their destructive power.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:27

In the diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MU members raise awareness of social issues in the UK and worldwide. By acknowledging the need to support prisoners and their families, members focus more on plight of others than on their own fear and so grow in Trust and Love.



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK FROM MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2021

Ageing with dignity

Bodies grow less dignified with age. Often minds do as well. 'Dignified' in this case implies a loss of control; a state we don't have any say in, even if we have given directives. Carers of the aged are trained to respect the client and their ministrations are sometimes appreciated and sometimes not. Dignity is seen today as respect that is due to a person. Another understanding of dignity refers to a quality emanating from the person themselves and has to do with their quality, being worthy, honourable. A naked Eve in the Garden of Eden is described by the poet Milton in *Paradise Lost*: 'Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her eye, / In every gesture dignity and love.' Book viii, lines 488-9.

But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
Proverbs 4:18

As we hold the Anglican Church in Burundi in our mind's eye and heart's care, may all that they ask for - peace and reconciliation, advocacy, education, health, literacy and financial education, and community development - lift the dignity and worth of its members.