

### Our Faith: Mothering Sunday

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known by a number of different names. It is kept as a day of greater festivity than the other Sundays of Lent – priests and deacons sometimes wear rose coloured vestments on this day - and is sometimes called Refreshment Sunday, though this title is less common nowadays, or Laetare Sunday. Laetare is a Latin word for 'rejoice'. In France it is called Mid-Lent and is sometimes celebrated with processions and feasting. Mothering Sunday is the name by which it is most commonly known and was once the day when servant girls were allowed to return to their homes to see their mothers. It was the custom for them to take simnel cake as a gift for their mothers, or to pick wild flowers on the way and make them into a posy tied up with ribbons. In more recent years, the secular celebration of Mother's Day has increasingly taken over from Mothering Sunday, however for Christians this is an occasion to give thanks to God for the gift of marriage and family life, for our own mothers living and departed, and for all who care for us; we should also give thanks for our mother the Church and, of course, for the love and protection of our Blessed Lady Mary, God's own Mother and ours. Next Sunday we enter into Passiontide and our thoughts turn to the cross of Christ. Let us entrust the next stage of our Lent pilgrimage to Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, who stood at the foot of her Son's cross, and ask her to walk with us towards Good Friday and from there to the joy of Easter.

### From the Fathers:

'The Lord tells us: *I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.* In these few words he gives a command and makes a promise...Let us do what he commands. Let us follow in the footsteps of the Lord. Let us throw off the chains that prevent us from following him.'  
*From a treatise on John by St Augustine*

### Collect:

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

10<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Fourth Sunday of Lent

(Mothering Sunday/ Laetare Sunday)



The Passion of the Lord is the Passion of his Blessed Mother also. Here we see the fulfilment of the prophecy of Simeon, when Jesus was presented in the Temple, that a sword shall pierce your own soul too. Now the Mother witnesses the death of her own Son. The great Roods, the hanging Crosses of our Churches may put this scene before our very eyes, of the Crucified Redeemer, the faithful Disciple, and the death of the One through whom we are truly given life. As Jesus commends his Mother and the beloved Disciple one to the other, God's people find a new family home in the Church. There is only one other place in the Gospel where Jesus calls his Mother, Woman, and that is the Wedding at Cana. There she says, Do whatever he tells you, and water is turned into wine, the first of his great signs. Now death becomes the way to life for us. May her words be the inspiration for our discipleship, and may the Blessed Mother of Sorrows pray for us.

*Gospel: St. John 19: 25b-27*