

## **Mothering Sunday 22 March 2020**

### **Collect**

Merciful Lord, absolve your people from their offences, that through your bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins which by our frailty we have committed; grant this, heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

### **Readings**

1. Exodus 2, 1-10
2. 2 Corinthians 1, 3-7
3. Luke 2, 33-35

### **Thought for the Day**

'It all depends upon how you look at it' How many times have we said that to ourselves? Pharaoh saw a threat in the boys of the Jewish slaves. His daughter saw a defenceless baby in the bulrushes. 1500 years after Herod saw another threat to his power and murdered the boys in Bethlehem whereas Simeon saw the Messiah. He also saw both the joy and happiness of a young mother and the anguish that was to come to her many years later as Mary stood by the Cross. Throughout all this, the humble folk involved in the two events were being battered and bruised by the events that were unfolding around them, yet God was there with them to guide and hold them as they sought to fight the horror that was so apparent all around them.

Surely that is a message for us today as we look at the world and all its power crashing about our ears. No government can be sure of the best way to fight the threat to our own society by an apparently rampant virus. Yet God is with us all, just as was with Mary and Simeon and before that Moses mother. They, no doubt, were guided and comforted by the knowledge that their prayers were being heard by God, even though they probably could not see it immediately. God was in charge and though all the hatred and anguish of the world around them, God's Will was being done. God is in charge today. He does hear our prayers and will, I'm sure, guide us all through this time of concern for us all. Our response should be prayerful action to support all those involved and a determination for us to place God firmly in the forefront of our response to the events we see around us. 'It all depends on how you look at it.'

*Based on an outline by Liz Shercliff, Reviews and resources editor of the College of Preachers*

### **Bishop's Prayer for use during the week**

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.

Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Home Communion

If you would like to join in a Home Communion at the same time. we would suggest the following

### Preparation

For the Bread and Wine, use any available food or drink, there is no need to use Bread and/or wine. A biscuit and soft drink is perfectly suitable and may be much preferable if children are with you and they can then join in. Remember that the last supper was much closer to an ad hoc picnic than a set banquet.

### The celebration

*A suitable prayer to use before you have the food and drink could be:-*

**Almighty God, we thank you for food and drink and we ask you to bless these offerings as our response to Jesus' command to "Do this in remembrance of me." Amen**

*Also please remember that God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is with us as we eat our home Holy Communion.*

### When to have your Communion

*So that we can feel that we are celebrating together, we would suggest that this is done immediately after reading the Morning Prayer service as set out in the Church of England sheet and that this should normally be read if possible at the normal service time for your Parish. If you wish please use either 9.30am or 11.00am as you time. That way as we end our short service we will all be celebrating together and can take comfort in still worshipping as a congregation of believers in our villages.*

**Please use the Bishop's prayer at the end.**