



4th Sunday of Lent - Laetare (rejoice) Sunday – Mothering Sunday

As you prepare for your time of prayer today, light your candle and become aware of your body sitting on the chair. The body that your mother brought into the world ?? years ago. Give thanks for your body, give thanks for your mother. Become aware of your breathing, breath that has sustained you, given you life each minute since your birth. Give thanks for it. Notice the air needed to keep the candle flame alight....notice the flame flickering.....life can be fragile. Life is precious.



In the 2nd Reading today from Ephesians 2: 4-10, Paul reminds us:

“We are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.”

What more encouragement do we need to value ourselves and to celebrate the life we have been given? Celebrations during Lockdown have had to be very muted but now we can begin to look forward to greater freedoms but just for today find a way celebrate the gift of life with your family. Think of the ways in which each one of them is God’s work of art!

Sing along with Graham Kendrick: Shine, Jesus, shine:

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my
darkness

Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me



For the mothering of mothers
and the mothering of fathers;
for the mothering of others;

Mother God
we give you thanks.

For those who act as midwife
to our hopes,
for those who nurse us through our pain,
for those who nurture, strengthen and guide us;

Mother God
we give you thanks.

For those who gently push us from the nest,
for those who welcome us home,
for those who become our family,
for the motherhood of the Church:

Mother God,
we give you thanks.

Kate McIlhaga

The theme of being loved by God is there again in today's **Gospel - Jn 3:14-21** when he was talking to Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees, who was afraid of openly acknowledging his interest in Jesus. He said,

“Yes, God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost but may have eternal life.”

Jesus was talking about himself and predicting the way his life on earth was going to end and at the same time be a way for us all to live forever in God. These are not easy thoughts to get our heads round. Just like Nicodemus we are full of questions about how these things can happen. We live our lives in a very tangible, concrete and increasingly technological world. The world of the Spirit, of the things of God, is intangible but we can approach it through symbols and metaphors as Jesus himself did earlier in his conversation with Nicodemus..

“The wind blows wherever it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.”

We are called to trust that we will be given just enough courage for us to keep putting one foot in front of the other, even in the dark, which has been a very real experience for some of us during the Pandemic. Not knowing is so much harder to deal with than any difficult experience. To feel secure we all need some measure of control in our lives and when we haven't got it life can feel very scary.

Take a moment to imagine a picture, or colours or marks on paper or even a piece of music or a song that sum up how you are feeling today and offer it to God as your prayer at the end of this reflection time with him.

