

## Sunday 'Spiritual Communion' on Mothering Sunday

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

### Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

**We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.**

### A Mothering Sunday Prayer

We thank God for the qualities of true motherhood shown in our lives and in our world. We pray in Memory of Mothers we are separate from this year, of Mothers no Longer with us, of Motherhood Lost, and of Motherhood Yearned For ...

**We remember all who have loved, laughed and laboured to care for us in our lives. We acknowledge those who have wept in sorrow as well as in joy because of motherhood. Blessed be God forever.**

### Prayers of Preparation and Confession

**Almighty God to whom all hearts are open,all desires known,and from whom no secrets are hidden:cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,that we may perfectly love you,and worthily magnify your holy name;through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Reflect on the week and on your relationships.

- What good things have come from God this week?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow?

You may wish to say or pray

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Christ, have mercy.**

**Lord, have mercy.**

A reading from the Gospel

Read John 9:1-41 (A reflection attached to the end of the service sheet)

## Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer.

**Our Father...**

Let us give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now and in the week ahead.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally in the bread and wine,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.  
Be with me and those whom I love and pray for as I offer myself to you.  
Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care..

**Lord, in days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful;  
in days of challenge, make us stronger in you;  
in days of emptiness, take possession of us;  
in days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross.**

Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**



The Peace of the Lord be always with you

Reflection on John 9: The story of a man born blind.

I wonder do you ever consider in what ways you are blind? I remember listening to a conversation between a blind theology tutor and his student in which the student asked him 'do you think you will be able to see in heaven'. The tutor replied ' I am hopeful we will all be able to see the things which we are blind to now in heaven'. He was reminding the student that blindness comes in many forms and we need healing from whatever leaves us in darkness.

So have we indeed been living in blindness to the 'realities' of our world. The Coronavirus has come as a huge shock to us. Within a very short time, it has challenged our attitudes and behaviours radically and most shocking is the fact that we seem to have been blind to the possibilities of an event like this ever affecting our lives. Have we been living and acting as though blind to what is real. When I use the word 'real' I do so, not with regards to proven 'facts' but to something beyond the myths and imaginary worlds we so often create to sooth our conscience or relieve our guilt . A kind of spiritual blindness as Jesus puts it to see only what we want to see.

This is the whole point of the story of the man born blind and his account of finding sight. It is a story not just of physical healing but of a spiritual light being shone on the community and people around him. It is as though Jesus is forcing the disciples, the Pharisees and Jewish teachers, the family and friends of the man, to be honest about how they see life. What do you see Jesus asks, a healing, a transgression of the Law, an undermining of your authority, a spiritual sign. What is this event 'really' about, people of Jerusalem?

The event of the Covid-19 epidemic in many ways asks us the same question. What is this 'really' about? Why are you 'really' afraid? Why do you 'really' behave the way you do in society, in your communities, in your homes?

Given these questions do we really want Jesus to heal our blindness and show us the reality that we have been unwilling or unable to see before? Were we born blind or has sin caused us to lose sight of the 'real'? Do we with the Pharisees shake our fists and stand affronted“ What? Are we blind too?”

In our modern world we are in a state of shock due to a lack of vision that such an event could overtake our lives. In many ways, we have been blind to the fact that the 'reality' is we are not in control of our lives, that we do not have a cure for every disease, that we cannot fend off all the dangers that threaten our securities. We have built up a shared short sightedness to protect us from seeing what lies in the future. But in seeking to protect ourselves from seeing in focus the hard truths of our own choices and behaviour we have also lost sight of the future beyond our anxieties and insecurities. We have allowed ourselves to become blind to the clarity of the promises made to us of a future salvation and freedom beyond the temporary trials of this world.

This crisis has healed the blindness we have developed in recent times. The reality of our frail lives stands here before us in full sight. Our securities no longer seem so secure, something in our world is

out of our control, and many don't know where to turn. Lets us turn to the giver of sight and bringer of truth who will allow us to see our world as we should if we will follow Him through the Lenten wilderness to the truth of the Easter garden which we are moving closer towards in the days ahead.