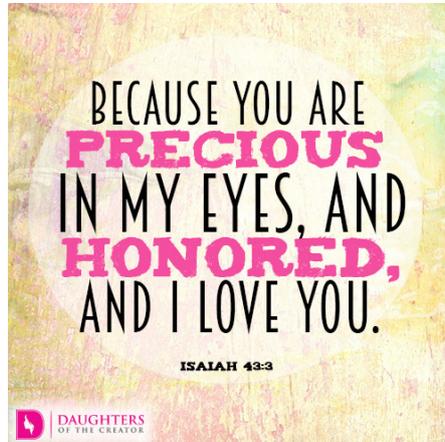


Devotions – Week 1
Sunday 22nd March 2020 - 4th Sunday in Lent



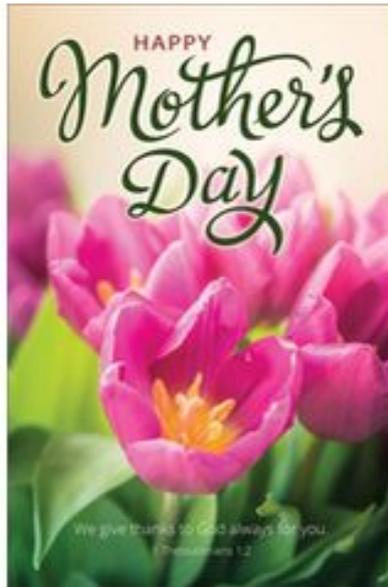
Isaiah 42:3

Hello to all my dear friends of John Ross Memorial Deaf Church,

I pray that you are all safe and well in this dreadful Coronavirus pandemic. It is very difficult to stay indoors all the time and the “social distance rule” is difficult to obey because we human beings are naturally social creatures and we all enjoy meeting people, having close friendships and close relationships. We enjoy hugs, high fives and hand shakings and to stand apart or stand away is a new social experience for all of us.

Today was a lovely sunny spring day and we had beautiful blue skies although the air was very chilly. This afternoon I looked up into the pale blue skies and I saw a tiny military jet plane flying in the sky with “smoke” billowing behind the plane. The first thing that came into my mind was “that’s taking social distancing a bit too far!”. Just my daft sense of humour!





**“We always remember you when we pray
and we thank God for all of you.” EVD
1st Thessalonians Chapter 1 Verse 2**

A very happy Mothers’ Day to all people who have mothers, to all people whose mothers are in heaven and to all who are mothers themselves. I hope and pray that people could still celebrate Mothers’ Day although it must have been a very difficult time for all of you because of the Coronavirus.

Mothering Sundays have always been held on the fourth Sunday in Lent and exactly three weeks before Easter Sunday and I believe it was originally a day set aside to honour and give thanks to the Virgin Mary, also known as Mother Mary. I also believe that people would visit their 'mother' church - the main church where the family’s ancestors used to worship. When Christianity had spread throughout Europe in the 16th century the spread of celebrations firmly put Mothering Sunday on the calendar.

On Mothers’ day in the UK and Ireland, is a day to show love, thankfulness and appreciation to all the wonderful mums everywhere and by tradition we give flowers, gifts and taking them out for meals but unfortunately we cannot do that just now as the government has told us all to stay at home and the restaurants and cafes have all closed so that we can all be safe.

In the bible we have one of the famous mothers of all, **Mary the mother of Jesus**. Mary was a **woman of courage** because the cross of Jesus was just about the most dangerous place for any person to be that day but Mary was there and above all we see in Mary, a mother’s love, a love that guided her to the cross itself. Can you picture her thoughts? Can you imagine her feelings? Mary could see her son,

the Son of God, dying on a tree. Oh yes she could have run away and be safe somewhere else. She could have disowned Jesus and said, "I want nothing to do with him." But no, she was suffering and feeling her son's agony on the cross. Motherhood today, calls on women to make the same sacrifice as Mary did. Motherhood today, ask for the same love that we see in the mother of Jesus. Of course we should be loyal to our children but we should also be loyal to our Lord Jesus Christ. Would you follow Jesus to the cross of pain, suffering and shame?

There is a growing attitude by all men and women to leave their responsibility to others. We live in a Welfare State and too many people think that the Government should look after their children and their problems but that is the wrong attitude. Today we can trace all the increases in juvenile crime, children being abused, neglected and perhaps left at home alone to the mothers and fathers who have not loved their children enough, mothers and fathers who were not loyal enough to their children. A **mother's love** (and fathers too) **is very important for the development of children.**

The greatest need for us all is to follow the examples of mothers like Mary, who had **lots of faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest need for us all is for men and women to have a sense of **Christian duty** and above all a sense of **Christian loyalty** to their children. All these qualities can and will make this a better world for us and for all the future generations to live in. Amen.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father.

In this quiet time.

We all stand before you face to face.

You are a wonderful God and Father of all people on earth.

We know you are the maker of heaven and earth and you have the power over all things.

Be with us now as we are worried and scared about this COVID-19.

We need your help to calm us all down.

We need your help to wipe away the disease soon.

So many people are suffering.

So many people are dying from this virus.

Father God, help all doctors, nurses and front-line workers in the NHS to cope with the sick in their care.

Help the scientists to find drugs to kill this virus.

Help the scientists to find a way of making vaccinations available to make people immune to the virus.

We pray that people will obey the rules of hand washings, staying at home and keeping away from families and friends.

We pray too for the safety of other people who still have to go to work in supermarkets, corner shops, food factories, lorry drivers and other front-line workers.

We pray also for the work of Boris Johnston and the UK Government and Nicola Sturgeon the First Minister of Scotland as they both work together in planning to make this country safe for the people to live in.

We say this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Closing Hymn

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies
Father, unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light,
Father, unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

For the joy of love from God,
That we share on earth below,
For our friends and family
And the love that they can show
Father, unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

For each perfect gift divine
To our race so freely given,
Thank you, Lord, that they are mine,
Here on earth as gifts from Heaven,
Father, unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

Folliott Pierpoint (1835—1917)

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Mission Praise