

Fourth Sunday of Lent

10th March 2024



God sent his Son so that through
him the world might be saved.
John 3

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known as Laetare Sunday, a day of celebration to remind us that we are nearing Easter and the rigours of Lent are nearing their end.

By the fourth Sunday of any Lent, we all welcome an element of joy in our journey towards Easter, but this year it's even more needed. This Mothering Sunday, when we can't do what we would normally do on this day, will be difficult for many but it may help to take a moment to consider the message in today's Gospel. God calls us into a face-to-face conversation. We aren't hearing a nice story about Rabbi Nicodemus's encounter with Jesus for long as when Nicodemus has gone home, we are the ones looking Jesus in the eye. He is talking directly to you and to me and to everyone who claims him as Lord and Saviour. Ours are the deeds that are being held up to the light in judgment. How does that belief show itself in the things we do? When our deeds are held up to the light, is it clear that they have been "done in God?"

We don't like to have our behaviour scrutinised for its godliness because we know we fall short. Every one of us falls short. We all need God's grace, that 'unmerited favour' God offers to everyone He loves.

Just like our mothers', God's love transcends merit. It doesn't grow or shrink depending on our actions. It is up to us to ensure we live up to this love through how we spend our lives.

This week let us pray for:

- ◆ All those countries at war;
- ◆ all those who are feeling isolated;
- ◆ all the Lenten intentions and promises throughout our community;
- ◆ all those connected to our community who are unwell, upset or mourning.

As we remember the important women in our lives, let us not forget Mary, Jesus' mother and mother to us all.

Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee.

Blessed are thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary Mother of God,

pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Mothering Sunday is always on the Fourth Sunday of Lent and you may find yourself wondering why this might be. This tradition has been around since medieval times. Mothering Sunday hasn't always been a day when we buy our mums flowers and cards and help out around the house all day so that she doesn't have to do anything. It was originally a day when people would visit their "mother" church. The mother church would have been the place where you were baptised: the local parish church or cathedral. In more recent times, people working in the service of others were given the day off to go and visit their mother church. This was usually something that people did as a whole family and was often one of the only chances for the whole family to get together. It then became part of the tradition for people to go and see their mothers on this day as well as go to their mother church. This eventually evolved into the current tradition of giving mothers gifts on Mothering Sunday.

God of goodness and mercy,

Let me be honest with myself as I look into my heart and soul, noticing the times I turn away from You. Guide me as I humbly seek to repent and return to your love.

Transform me this Lent, heavenly Father. Give me the strength to commit myself to grow closer to You each day.

Amen.

**"Prayer is the raising of
the mind to God. We
must always remember
this. The actual words
matter less."**

Pope John XXIII