

## Meditation and Thoughts for Mothering Sunday 22.3.2020

### **Exodus 1:22- 2:10; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7**

It seems very strange to me to be contemplating Mothering Sunday without the normal celebration in church, or the opportunity to meet up with family members apart from our immediate household, but our current situation **is** indeed a strange one to all of us. The current 'Lockdown' situation resonates for me a little bit with the actions of Moses' mother seen here trying to protect her baby son from the death sentence imposed on all Hebrew baby boys by Pharaoh. We are in effect trying to limit the effects of an invisible threat which could be equally deadly to some vulnerable members of society.

The heroes of this story from Exodus are all women. First, Moses' mother who hid him for three months, and then, fearing his discovery, floated him on the Nile (a dangerous thing in itself to do with crocodiles about) and even got to act as his wet nurse until he was weaned. Next, his sister kept watch over the child and had the courage to approach Pharaoh's daughter to suggest finding a nurse. Finally, Pharaoh's daughter 'took pity on him', had him nursed and eventually adopted him. None of these women is named. The story is about how God protected the child and did so through these women whose names no one has remembered.

Mothering Sunday is a time when we obviously think of and thank God for both our mothers who brought us life, and those who act in the caring and nurturing roles of mothers- as all three of the women in this story do. It is also a time when in Medieval times people returned to their 'Mother Church', or their Cathedral church to say thank you to God for the care and nurture of the church in bringing them to faith and eternal life.

The role of a mother is important to everyone, for without our mothers none of us would even be here, and it is our mothers who fed nurtured and guided us in our early years and protected us from harm. Being a mother does not come to everyone easily, and can be quite a **sacrificial** task. The child/children that is 'knit together in the mother's womb' by God (Psalm 139:13) becomes the mother's primary focus, and sacrifices can be careers, social standing and putting the child/ children's wellbeing before the mother's own or even risking life and limb for the sake of the child as were the case in this story. Having put all the devotion she can give, there comes also the pain of **letting go-** and letting God take care of the onward growth and direction of our children.

Moses' mother must have felt that trepidation particularly hard twice- when she launched the papyrus basket onto the Nile and again when she presented Moses to the Palace.

And so we too in our situation today are **sacrificing** for the sake of those who are vulnerable as well as for ourselves. Sacrificing our social contact, our recreation and in so many instances our livelihoods and income to try and control the deadly spread of a pandemic viral infection. Paul speaks of identifying with the church in their suffering, knowing that Christ too understands their suffering. He also says that we can be comforted and consoled by our God who understands the pain of **letting go**, of missing human contact and who is with us through our suffering, but who still offers us life eternal. We must not lose hold of this hope that Christ's suffering has bought us. Christ is alive and he stands with us and walk with us as our Good shepherd through the valley of the shadow of death to lead us to the eternal celebration. (Psalm 23)

As we pray today we thank God for our mothers and for those who journeyed with us as we grew in faith.

And we pray for - those who long to be mothers,  
-those who struggle with the idea of motherhood,  
-those who have taken on the role of caring for others as a mother,  
stepmother, grandmothers and other carers,  
And - those who are struggling with losing children as they grow up and leave,  
or in situations of broken homes, or if they are taken through illness and death.

We also pray for all who are missing their mothers at this time whether through separation, illness or bereavement.

Lord may your comfort and love and hope be ever with them and also with us.  
Amen

Jenny Smith