

**Transformation – NOW!
MARY SUMNER**

Welcome

Mary Sumner was a woman of deep faith, with a heart for prayer and a determination to make a difference in the lives of others. She listened to God and acted upon his call. Contrary to what is often assumed, she was an older woman, a grandmother, when she took the first steps which eventually led to the establishment of Mothers' Union. She was not a natural speaker, but her faith and resolve to follow God's call to make a difference to families and society, laid the foundations for today's worldwide movement.

Opening Prayer

Speak to us, Lord, as we draw near to you.
Still our restless thoughts and calm our active minds.
Quieten our spirits to hear your gentle voice.
Open our ears to hear of your love;
open our hearts to perceive your will.
Give us your grace to heed your words and follow where you lead.
Speak to us, Lord, for your servants are listening. Amen

Hymn: Tell out my soul

sung by St Martin's Voices

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (born 1926) from Luke 1 vs46-55
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Reflection and Bible Reading: Philippians 1: 3–6; 9–11

In this reflection, you are invited to respond to a series of questions, with short pauses to allow you time to think.

Question ... Who comes to mind when you think of a woman of deep faith? A woman you would describe as having a heart for prayer and a determination to make a difference. ...

Take a moment to allow those thoughts to surface and visualise the person you have chosen. What words would describe them?

How has their faith impacted on you ...?

Such women become a quiet inspiration for us ... role models for Christian living ... women about whom we might say, "I want to be like that."

As you think of her, reflect now on her struggles ... Because they will be there... This woman will have had things in her life that were stumbling blocks ... perhaps self-imposed or put there by others.

What do you think gave her courage and hope to persevere? What made her say, “I can do this. I will do this!”?

As you reflect this day, take a moment to thank God for her, and for her influence on your own faith.

One such woman was, of course, Mrs. Mary Sumner.

What would she make of us today, 4 million strong, in 83 countries, putting their faith into action, because of hers?

Let us imagine her reading the following passage to us, taken from Philippians 1: 3–6; 9–11

... To my dear members of the Mother’s Union.

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. Amen.

Hymn: Spirit of the Living God

sung by Katie Ritson

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me

Spirit of the living God
Fall afresh on us
Spirit of the living God
Fall afresh on us

Daniel Iverson

Intercessions

In thankfulness for the life of Mary Sumner, Lord we pray:
For the desire to love and serve you,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,
hear our prayer.

For families who live where there is war, oppression, injustice and poverty,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,
hear our prayer.

For homes of peace and love, reflecting your love for us all,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,
hear our prayer.

For marriages, that each may grow ever deeper in love for the other.
For grace to be able to forgive and be forgiven,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,
hear our prayer.

For children to grow up to know and love you,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,
hear our prayer.

For families who know the pain of illness of body, mind or spirit,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,

hear our prayer.

For Mothers' Union across the world. For courage, energy
and a sense of adventure to fulfil its calling,

Pause

Spirit of the living God,

hear our prayer.

We pray in thanksgiving for all who have run the race and kept the faith.
May we also share in your heavenly kingdom.

Pause

Spirit of the living God,

hear our prayer.

Mothers' Union Australia

Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence together as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom
come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our
daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who
trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever
and ever. Amen

Mary Sumner's prayer

*set to music by Revd Roger Hagon, Vicar of St Mildred's Church Addiscombe,
and sung by their Ladies Choir, conducted by Penny Locke and
accompanied by Richard Mander*

All this day, O Lord

let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;

and every life I touch,
do thou by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.

Amen.

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Dismissal

Lord, we give thanks for the life of Mary Sumner, for her obedience to your calling, for her vision for the Mothers' Union. We pray that through the grace of your Holy Spirit we may receive renewed confidence and share that vision. We give you thanks and praise for the many people around the world who reach out in the name of Mothers' Union. Through our work may we touch the lives of those we meet, that they, too, may know your love. Amen

God above us, **give us faith.**

Christ beside us, **give us love.**

Spirit within us, **give us hope.**

**And now may the God of hope fill us
with all joy and peace in believing
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may abound in hope. Amen**

Mothers' Union Australia

Hymn: Forth in the peace of Christ

sung by St Martin's Voices

Forth in the peace of Christ we go;
Christ to the world with joy we bring;
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,
Christ in our hearts, the world's true King.

King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings;
kingship with him, his servants gain;
with Christ, the Servant-Lord of all,
Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.

Priests of the world, Christ sends us forth
this world of time to consecrate,
our world of sin by grace to heal,
Christ's world in Christ to re-create.

Prophets of Christ, we hear his Word;
he claims our minds, to search his ways;
he claims our lips, to speak his truth;
he claims our hearts, to sing his praise.

We are his Church, he makes us one;
here is one hearth for all to find;
here is one flock, one Shepherd-King;
here is one faith, one heart, one mind.

James Quinn (1919-2010)

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Closing prayer

from Mothers' Union Australia

Lord, we give thanks for the life of Mary Sumner, for her obedience to your calling, for her vision for the Mothers' Union. We pray that through the grace of your Holy Spirit we may receive renewed confidence and share that vision. We give you thanks and praise for the many people around the world who reach out in the name of Mothers' Union.

Through our work may we touch the lives of those we meet, that they, too, may know your love.

Amen

Blessing

God above us, **give us faith.**

Christ beside us, **give us love.**

Spirit within us, **give us hope.**

**And now may the God of hope fill us
with all joy and peace in believing
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may abound in hope. Amen**

Material: as stated

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Theme image: Erik Karits on Pixabay.com

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**Thursday Prayers next month will be on
14th September 2023 – Creation**