

**Rebuilding Hope and Confidence -  
Mary Sumner's Vision**

**Welcome**

When Mary Sumner first had the vision for what is now the Mothers' Union she was the wife of the Rector of Old Alresford in Hampshire. She became aware that mothers in the parish were struggling to bring up their families in a Christian way and when her eldest daughter had her first child in 1876 Mary was spurred to gather a group of those mothers in the Rectory to pray and talk together about their situations. The group soon became a place of mutual support and encouragement and in 1885 Mary was invited to speak about her mothers' group at the Portsmouth Church Congress, about being an example to children and making prayer central to family life. As a result of this talk a number of women went back to their parishes and set up their own mothers' groups. Within just seven years the movement had spread to eight countries and had 60,000 members.

This month we remember and celebrate Mary Sumner's vision and commitment and look again at some of the ways in which this diocese is making the vision real for our time. As you hear about these please take time to pray for those who live by her vision and keep it alive.

**Hymn: How deep the Father's love for us**  
*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1 How deep the Father's love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure,  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure.  
How great the pain of searing loss -  
The Father turns His face away,  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory.
- 2 Behold the man upon a cross,  
My sin upon His shoulders;  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers.  
It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished;  
His dying breath has brought me life -  
I know that it is finished.
- 3 I will not boast in anything,  
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,  
His death and resurrection.  
Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer;  
But this I know with all my heart -  
His wounds have paid my ransom.

*Stuart Townend*

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## **Bible Reading: Matthew 25: 34-40**

Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

‘Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?”

‘The Lord will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

## **Reflection**

*Music: Simplicity by David Fesliyan*

We think of the many projects undertaken by members here in the Diocese of Manchester, and please take these moments to pause, to reflect and to pray that we may truly make a difference in the lives of families in our communities.

Lord hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

## **Poem: A Wave**

*This poem was written by member Revd Terry Roberts  
for the Wave of Prayer*

Stretching as far as the eye can see  
A blue ocean reflects the heavens  
Still and calm it brings peace and tranquillity  
The Wind of the Spirit moves over the deep  
And waves begin to form  
They stretch beyond the horizon  
Across all the seas and oceans covering the world  
Each wave made of millions of drops in motion.  
Our prayers, like each drop in the ocean,  
Cover the world;  
Driven by the spirit they become waves  
Touching the very fabric of God's creation,  
Bringing peace and tranquillity to situations, to conflict,  
To our Souls

## **Mary Sumner's Personal Prayer**

*Written by her in 1876 and then prayed by her every day  
for the rest of her life*

All this day, O Lord, let me touch  
as many lives as possible for thee;  
*Lord, we thank you for the lives touched throughout the years  
and throughout the world by the members of Mothers' Union*  
and every life I touch do thou  
by thy spirit quicken,

*We pray that those whom we serve will experience the reality of your love through our prayers, words and actions.*

whether through the word I speak,  
the prayer I breathe  
or the life I live. Amen

**Blessing:**

All praise be to God, by whose power  
one woman's vision became reality  
through the founding of Mothers' Union.  
All praise be to God who has led us thus far  
and whose Spirit inspires for what lies ahead.

The blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain  
with you always. Amen.

**Hymn: Now thank we all our God**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

I        Now thank we all our God,  
          with hearts and hands and voices,  
          who wondrous things hath done,  
          in whom his world rejoices;  
          who from our mothers' arms  
          hath blessed us on our way  
          with countless gifts of love,  
          and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us;  
and keep us in his grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son, and him who reigns  
with them in highest heaven,  
the one eternal God,  
whom earth and heaven adore,  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.

*Nun danket alle Gott Martin Rinkart (1586-1649)  
Translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)*

## **Thank you for joining in with Thursday Prayers.**

Choral music: The Church of England St Martin in the Fields

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

Material: ©Mothers' Union, unless otherwise stated

Readers: Joy Butterworth, Barbara Pye, Barbara Taylor, Rachel Mann, Margaret Shewring, Margaret Morris, Kirsty Screeton

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**Next Thursday Prayers will be on 9<sup>th</sup> September with the theme of “God’s Creation”.**