

A Splash of Pink

For hundreds of years in Britain the fourth Sunday of Lent, which is this coming Sunday, has been a day of celebration; a brief pause in the sombreness of Lent when fasting rules were relaxed for a day. Priests wore pink rather than the darker purple as a sign of a Sunday where Lenten observance was just a little lighter. Sometimes people from the parishes were encouraged to go to the Mother Church or Cathedral and children, who often left their homes to work in service at around 10 years old, were given this Sunday off to go home and visit their mothers. Legend has it that as they walked, they gathered small posies of flowers to take to their mothers, which is why many churches, my own included, will give flowers this Sunday to those who come to our service.

But at St Mary's on Sunday, and in churches up and down the land, it won't be Mother's Day that we're celebrating but Mothering Sunday. Many of us have wonderful Mums and I'm sure many people reading this are wonderful Mums too but mothering is something that goes beyond those who brought us into this world. I have been mothered beautifully, cared for and nurtured by so many remarkable woman in my life, many of whom have never given birth. Human families are complicated things and instead of focusing only on those I'm related to, I'd rather celebrate and thank God for all those who mother. Theirs are the roles that are often overlooked. Just as children often take the care of our own mothers for granted, very often we take the caring jobs in our churches and community for granted too and this Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to remember how crucial they are. Mothering doesn't stop with human beings either. Although we're more used to calling God "Our Father" than mother, Jesus tells us that God longs to gather us under his wings as a mother hen gathers her chicks so even those without an earthly Mum have a heavenly one who longs to hold them.

So a bit of a challenge; whether you're a mum or not, allow yourself a touch of pink this weekend. Deliberately do something that will bring you joy; take time to be grateful for the good things amidst the darkness of our world. It could be as simple as buying yourself a bunch of daffs to remember that spring is coming and while you're at it, why not give a bunch to someone who mothers others too?

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