



11 March 2018 – Mothering Sunday
Sermon for 8.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Numbers 21: 4-9
The Gospel of St John 3: 14-21
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

The readings for this service are those for Lent 4 rather than Mothering Sunday but I still think it's possible to discern the essence of reflecting on:

- Our own mothers;
- The mother of Jesus; and
- Mother Church.

Unlike decades ago, today many fathers share the nurturing of their children equally. But all of us use mothering skills when we see someone, of whatever age, in need of loving kindness. I'm also sure that when Guernsey children were evacuated to England in 1940, just like modern-day refugees, the older children would have put their mothering skills to good use for the sake of their younger companions.

In a similar context this is what Moses was having to do with the Israelites fleeing Egypt through the wilderness to the Promised Land. He cares for them and yet is utterly exasperated with them, as would any mother be with wilful children chorusing the age-old gripe of "It's not fair!" Any mother using her abilities wisely will encourage her children to say sorry. When the Israelites come with contrite hearts to Moses, wisely he recognises that his ability comes from God, so he prays for help. The resulting Bronze Serpent raised up on a pole becomes the Israelites means of physical salvation.

In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us of God's mothering love, which sent him into the world to be born of Mary and become our eternal salvation. Mary is not mentioned in the Gospel but children reflect their parents nurturing. In the Gospel Jesus teaches his disciples and us all, as a mother would teach her children to discern the difference between good deeds and bad deeds: what brings light into godly living or turns hearts to spiritual darkness. In acknowledging our faults with repentant hearts, we return to the light and renew our membership of Christ's Church.

And so, this morning, as his Church we nurture each other with our shared worship and praise of God. But, none of this would be possible if Jesus had not been raised up on the cross like that Serpent in the Wilderness. To turn to Christ's light with contrite hearts seeking forgiveness and being forgiven is the best mothering we can receive. The question is, what sort of children are we? Wilful or Contrite?

Amen.