

Mothering Sunday 2019
Christ the King

Introduction, commenting that, although it's Mothering Sunday, the songs we have used have referred to God as Father. Spoke briefly about Biblical images of "mothering" character of God especially as of feeding a child, of comforting a child, and of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and wanting to gather her people "as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings." (Luke 13:34).

The reading was Psalm 139: 13-16, and I followed it with this story.....

The sun slipped below the horizon. Dusk deepened. A chill breeze began to blow and God turned sadly from her watching place, and moved indoors.

Another day, and still the girl hadn't come.

From within the house came the sound of happy voices. Her children, safe at home. Like all families they had their moments, but generally all was well – and at special times, Christmas and especially Easter, when the angels gathered them all together and taught them how to sing, they made a truly joyful noise.

But there was always one voice missing.

God sighed. She had known the missing voice since before the child was born, since she imagined the girl, before even time began.

"She will be able to sing," God had decided, "and will laugh easily and often. She will be kind; and interested in finding things out. She will be good at understanding people, and clever with words."

God smiled as she recalled how she had loved the child as she developed in the womb, was born, and grew from a baby to a toddler to a child. As she learned to use her gifts. At first all had been well.

But God's face saddened as she remembered how she had watched the girl discovering that she could use her gifts in a different way. When she saw her laughing *at* people instead of with them; when she realised the girl was kind only when she would get something back; when her precious child learned how to manipulate people into doing what *she* wanted.

The girl was clever, but became proud, and forgot that her gifts came from God. She thought she had done everything herself. She decided God didn't exist and stopped coming home.

God had tried to keep in touch, but the girl never responded. After a while she stopped noticing. All God's emails were directed straight into the delete box, and her phone number was blocked. All that remained was an old entry in a discarded address book.

But God still held her in her heart. She still hoped against hope that one day her precious daughter would return. That was why she stood, day after day, watching the road. Waiting.

The next morning came. The sun rose. God returned to her place. Watching. Waiting.

A cloud of dust appeared on the horizon. God blinked. Could this be her? Could it? She had hoped and become excited so many times before, only to find it was a trick of the light or the wind stirring the dust.

But surely this time it was getting bigger? A figure appeared. A young woman clutching an ancient and tatty address book.

Running now. Running towards Mother God who was running towards her until they met – suddenly. And stopped.

"I'm sorry..." the young woman began to say

But she got no further, as she was enveloped in the biggest hug she had ever had in her life. God's love flowed into every part of her being. She felt free and real and so, so alive.

"Welcome home," said Mother God. "The angels have been practicing a special song for today. Let's go and have a party....."