

Lent Devotional March 15, 2026

Scripture

Romans 8:11-25

11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Devotion

The Rev. Dr. Ian Alexander '24

In Scotland, where I live, the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent is Mothering Sunday. Nowadays, it is rather like Mother's Day in the United States, but its origins are quite different. In some traditions it is still called Laetare Sunday from the first few words of the traditional reading for today: "Laetare Jerusalem" ("Rejoice, O Jerusalem") from Isaiah 66:10.

On Mothering Sunday, it was expected that you would return to your mother church—the church in which you received the sacrament of baptism and became "a child of the church," celebrated since the Middle Ages. Mothering Sunday became a day when servants were given time off and could return to their home villages to attend church with their own mothers and wider families.

There was also on this Sunday a reprieve from the rules of fasting, and so special foods were eaten, particularly the simnel cake, perhaps from the day's association with the story of the feeding of the five thousand.

We can take the message of Mothering Sunday as saying to us, in the midst of Lent, that we can still rejoice, for we are led by the generous Spirit of God to be children of a God who, like both mother and father, cares for all God's children, everywhere in our world. The promise of Christ is that we can live abundantly, that the offer of fullness of life is not a financial offer but a relational one that is for everyone through the boundless generosity of the Holy Spirit. "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (Rom 8:14).

Prayer

Rejoice in the Lord.

We give thanks for a God who
offers the love of a mother and father to all;
we give thanks for Jesus who
promises fullness of life to all people;
we give thanks for the Holy Spirit, helping us
find abundant life in relationship with each other.
Amen.