



# Kaurihohore Historic Church

P O Box 4118, Kamo, Whangarei 0141



## Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 8 May 2022 – Easter 4

*Our service today is led Rev Freddy De Alwis*

### **Welcome and Introduction:**

**Sentence:** A woman spoke up from the crowd and called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” Luke 11:27

### **Call to Worship and Prayer:**

Today we celebrate our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and all the women who have loved us.

**Thank you, God for giving us mothers.**

We remember with deep gratitude all the ways they demonstrated their love for us.

**Sometimes we did not understand them, but we know that God understood.**

We take time to remember our mothers because a mother's love is most like God's love. For their tears, for their hugs, for their wisdom, for their unfailing trust in our abilities.

**We give thanks to you Lord.**

For all the women who have desperately wanted to have children of their own, but chose instead to mother everyone else.

**Thank God for the mothers in spirit.**

We thank you, Lord, for the women who have influenced our lives in so many ways.

**We pray that we will honour them in everything we do. Amen**

**Hymn HFTC 42:** *Tell Out My Soul*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6ji4y9Q-K0>

## **Prayer of confession and healing:**

God of love, who weaves the connections between us,  
the shared stories, the bonds of love, the power of memory.

**We come before you today to offer you our worship and praise.**

God of relationship,

Father, Mother, Son, Comforter God, community of love,

we remember that you have made us to be formed by relationship.

To be child, parent, brother, sister, lover, spouse, and friend.

**We thank you for the pleasure and possibilities of our relationships,  
for family, for our friends, for each love, for every tenderness  
we thank you.**

Yet our thankfulness does not make us naïve.

It does not take away our experiences of hurt,

nor the awareness of the hurt we have inflicted on those closest to us.

**Forgive us God, for the hurt we cause,  
for harsh words said, for relationships harmed,  
forgive us and help us to forgive.**

Hear then the good news,

God hears and heals us.

God shows us mercy and calls us to be merciful.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Amen.**

© David Poultney (used with permission)

**Hymn HFTC 33;** *Now Thank We All Our God*

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmJtef10DWw>**

**First Reading:** Ephesians 6:1-4

**Second Reading:** Luke 1: 39-56

## **Reflection on Mother's Day:**

Mother's Day 2022 we all know there is nothing more precious in this world than a mother's hug, and to return the hug she deserves. But for today some of our parents live in another region or rest homes some of which are still out of bounds under COVID restrictions.

No matter if the mum in your life is near or far, you can still make her happy by a telephone call, because she is thinking of you, say you LOVE her! Spend a little time talking to her. Thanks for doing this. I know that most of you are talking to your mum every day during this difficult time, but not all? Please remember she is waiting....

Today Mother's Day message is not mainly for our mums but for you and me. The reflection and my imaginations come from my interactions with my own mum, it's quite emotional and sentimental because she passed away in 1991 soon after my ordination. But my memories are still very fresh.

As I thought about the message, I thought, what can I say about a mother that has not already been said before? The answer is, I doubt seriously whether there is anything I can say that would be new.

There will be many messages delivered this morning via emails, TV's and electronical media about the **virtuous and godly mother** of Proverbs: "*Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above gold. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her*" (Proverbs 31:10, 28). No doubt the story of **Jochebed** will be repeated (the mother of Moses). What a wonderful story of a mother's love and sacrifice for her son.....The story of **Hannah**, the mother of Samuel, and how she dedicated him to the Lord, and how God honored her request by using him in the ministry, and the mother of John and Charles Wesley, **Susanna**. In 2021 Mother's Day I preached on the topic of **The Role of Mother in the light of Mary**, what an incredible mother she was. She never took her eyes off her son – the journey with Jesus in her womb to the tomb. A woman spoke up from the crowd and called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." Luke 11:27.

Certainly, there is much we can say about mothers, so many stories and they are very **positive** thank God for them. But sadly, there are many **negative** stories we experience, we hear and read. That is the reality of our time. I strongly think that we need to address them and come to the feet of Christ to reflect and pray, then ask forgiveness from one another.

## **Distance in Motherly Relationships**

Sometimes relationships between mothers and their children are filled with anger, disappointment and bitterness.

Maybe your mother was not there for you, did not protect you, made you feel like you could never be good enough or do enough, and this made you feel like you could not talk to her, because she always criticized you. You may have felt like you never lived up to what she wanted you to be. She may never have taken the time to know you, or she may have left you out, or she was pre-occupied with herself, or other ways.

Perhaps you lost your mother through death and felt deserted as well. Some moms are very abusive and/or manipulative.

*(If you have been plagued with anger, disappointment and/or bitterness toward your mother or any other mother figure in your life believe me, God can free you. (Below is a prayer for repentance and forgiveness.)*

*Please take a little time and pray before you read the rest.)*

We live in a world filled with temptations, division and isolation and also addictions that destroy ourselves, our relationships and keep us away from a God, away from our parent, away from love, joy, happiness and relationship.

### **Society has inflicted the negative impact on our Mothers/women...**

- Some women are devalued, and/or abused, neglected, not respected, and seen as inferior to others.
- Some women's voices are not heard because they are not in a position of authority, so their voices are non-existent or disregarded. No one is really interested in what they think, feel, want or need so they might as well not express it. This makes them feel "less-than human."
- Some mothers may have never wanted children but, with their culture and social backgrounds put so much pressure on them, therefore they had to give birth and raise children.
- Women who have been subjected to being bullied, have internalized their negativity without addressing it and therefore feel unworthy, defective, and less.

Dear Friends this is not good news, the question is, how do we turn this around? What went wrong? We may not be guilty? I don't know?? But feel somewhat responsible. The Bible is very clear in saying **Honour/ respect your father and your mother**," so that you may live a long time Ex 20:12. "**Honour/ respect your father and your mother**," **Ephesians 6:2**.

In this scenario mothers play a vital role and that role has been reflected in the Bible and it even has been identified as a **female image of God**. Because, "mother is" the best reflection of God. I would like to concentrate and talk about Divinity and the Female Image of God, and first we will reflect on few biblical passages to understand this concept.

## Divinity and the Female Image of God

Most Christians are familiar with referring to **God as Father**, that's fine with me but the Bible does not shy away from using the female image of God — **God as Mother** particularly related to birth and motherhood—

- Isaiah 42:14 speaks of God “crying out like a woman in labour”.
- Similarly, Isaiah 46:3–4 describes God as having carried the house of Jacob “from the womb.”
- In Numbers 11:12, Moses tells God that having birthed Israel, God (not Moses) should “carry [the nation] in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child” to the Promised Land.
- In Isaiah 66:13, I will comfort you “As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.”
- How many times have I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings... Luke 13:34 (The biblical text uses images from motherhood to describe Jesus as well). Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, evokes a mother's comfort and concern. (Luke 13:34 and Matt. 23:37).

**This maternal images of God** “giving birth, nursing, comforting and caring” highlight our complete reliance and total dependence on God the mother for both spiritual and natural birth and growth.

Understanding God as “Mother” is God's character. Mothers have no limits of Love nor does God. God's love, comfort, and care know no limits or bounds.

The Mother - she is so much more than mother. She is daughter, lover and friend. She is a wise woman and a queen.

She is sky, earth and sea. She is so much more than we can name. We don't yet know what she is really like.

What we see here, is the Bible writers trying to understand God's love and care through the character of mother.

The Bible does not say honour your mother **only on a designated day**, that's an insult to your mother, she has done so much for you and me, but we are to give honour to our mothers every day. Not only does God acknowledge the importance of honouring our mothers, but on the cross Jesus passed his responsibility to one of His beloved disciples. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, Mother, behold your son! Then he said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home. John 19:26-27. Notice that from that very hour she was taken into his home, and although he had his own birth mother, he also honoured Mary as his mother. Let us pray and ask blessings to our mums. Amen.

## **Mother's Day Prayer**

On this day of celebrating your love, we give you thanks for those who have given us life. We praise you, O God, for **your gift of motherly love**, both strong and humble, both kind and true.

*For those mothers who have joined with you and whom we miss dearly this day, we give you thanks. We are guided by their spirit and we remember that you promise us communion with your saints. So by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are never fully separated from them.*

For mothers who work day and night to raise and care for their children, we give you thanks.

Lord helps us to sustain these mothers in their time of need and answer your call to reach out to them in compassion and love.

We pray for young mothers and those who are expecting children, we praise you, O God, for the joy and anticipation of new life.

We also pray, O God, for the mothers who have failed to live up to the call of motherhood. We believe you are a God of healing and we remember that we all stand in the need of your grace.

Where we cannot forgive, Lord gives us strength.

We stand in solidarity this day, O God, with all of the mothers around the world who have watched their children die of hunger,..... every mother who has been a victim of abuse,..... Every woman who stands against a world that massacres her children in the name of war,... and to rename them "collateral damage." We lift to you the spirits of all mothers around the world – even those mothers we will never know personally. We praise your name and lift all mothers, those we have mentioned and those left unmentioned.

Loving God we ask your blessings upon all the moms, grand moms, great grand moms and aunts, who are with us this morning, be with them Lord, give them happiness and joy, confidence and courage. We ask in your holy name. **Amen.**

## **Prayer of Repentance**

**Dear Loving God,**

**Thank you for your grace and mercy to me.**

**Lord Jesus, You are my Saviour, Lord and Healer.**

**I surrender to you my whole life, past, present and future.**

**Forgive me for my hardness of heart which I have displayed to others as well as you.**

**Cleanse me of all self-absorption, self-pity, anger, hatred, bitterness, vengefulness, hopelessness and resentment.**

**Walk back, Lord Jesus, into the first moments in my mother's womb,  
into the first years of my life and heal my family tree.**

**Make up for any lack in my mother's love.**

**For the times when I was frightened or lonely,  
suffered from being separated from my mother in the early years of my life,  
when there was fighting, abuse or drinking,  
or when I felt left out, please heal me Jesus by Your merciful love.**

**Help me to walk in your love and to know your love in my own heart  
for all the mother figures in my life.**

**Though I don't have it within me, I know that you have it within you  
and that you share your power with the weak.**

**I confess my weakness and I look to you to make me strong  
in love, patience, longsuffering and humility.**

**I look to all the testing of my faith as something good,  
for you know it will make me stronger in it.**

**I'm calling on you for forgiveness and the strength to believe Your Word  
and to follow it.**

**Now, Lord, please send me the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen me  
so I can follow through with all you've put in my heart.**

**Help me not to stumble back into my old ways, but walk in the newness of  
life that you have promised those who you loved.**

**Let my life be the very fragrance of grace to all I meet.**

**Let me show others the kind of love that you have shown  
me.**

**Thank you for your faithfulness Lord.**

**I cling to your mercy and love You with all my heart. Amen  
(Author unknown)**



**Hymn:** *Today we remember our mothers with pride* (Tune: Believe me if all those endearing young charms). Public Domain download for free from the internet.

Today we remember our mothers with pride,  
Those with us and those who've passed on,  
They gave to us life, then let us decide  
The pathway we'd journey along.

*Chorus:*

*So let us today, sing aloud of their faith,  
And learn from their lives if we will,  
For being a mother in this day and age,  
Is a challenge that lies with us still.*

From Sarah to Mary, faith stories are told,  
How they nurtured their children with skill,  
Through hardship, and toil, they built their households,  
Their wisdom and faith touch us still.

Now thanks be for mothers, and fathers too,  
Who nurture our children with care,  
Who lead by example, with hope in their hearts,  
That our children in Christ's love will share.

©Norman E Brookes

### **Prayers of the People:**

Let us pray together:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:  
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the people of the  
world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope  
and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.**

**From trials too great to endure, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and  
for ever. Amen.**

**Hymn AA 8: *Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You***

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JahFRDrSCs>**

**Benediction & Grace:**

**Go into your week, knowing that you are embraced by the love of  
God;**

**a love that is sweeter and more tender than any you have ever  
known.**

**Go now to love and serve**

**We go in the name of Christ.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen, Amen, Amen.**

***Silent prayer for healing...if you wish to ...***

*Dear Loving God,*

*Thank you for your grace and mercy to me.*

*Lord Jesus, You are my Saviour, Lord and Healer.*

*I surrender to you my whole life, past, present and future.*

*Forgive me for my hardness of heart which I have displayed to others  
as well as you.*

*Cleanse me of all self-absorption, self-pity, anger, hatred, bitterness, vengefulness, hopelessness and resentment.  
Walk back, Lord Jesus, into the first moments in my mother's womb, into the first years of my life and heal my family tree.  
Make up for any lack in my mother's love.  
For the times when I was frightened or lonely, suffered from being separated from my mother in the early years of my life,  
when there was fighting, abuse or drinking, or when I felt left out, please heal me Jesus by Your merciful love.  
Help me to walk in your love and to know your love in my own heart for all the mother figures in my life.  
Though I don't have it within me, I know that you have it within you and that you share your power with the weak.  
I confess my weakness and I look to you to make me strong in love, patience, longsuffering and humility.  
I look to all the testing of my faith as something good, for you know it will make me stronger in it.  
I'm calling on you for forgiveness and the strength to believe Your Word and to follow it.  
Now, Lord, please send me the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen me  
so I can follow through with all you've put in my heart.  
Help me not to stumble back into my old ways, but walk in the newness of life that you have promised those who you loved.  
Let my life be the very fragrance of grace to all I meet.  
Let me show others the kind of love that you have shown me.  
Thank you for your faithfulness, Lord.  
I cling to your mercy and love You with all my heart. Amen  
(Author unknown)*