

Sunday 14th March 2021

The Fourth Sunday of Lent



Today's Gospel reading: John 19: 25-27

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St John
Glory to you, O Lord

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ

If we think of Mothering Sunday as simply "Mothers' Day" we miss a great deal of the meaning of this special day. Its origins lie in the fact that the fourth Sunday in Lent was seen as a day for a bit of a break from Lenten fasting! "Refreshment Sunday", as it is still sometimes called, gave people a chance to rest from the disciplines of Lent and to spend time with their families. As the years went by, for young people who had left home to enter domestic service, this Sunday became a chance for a day off to visit their family home and to worship with their families in their "mother church" – the church in which they had grown up.

Often, employers would send girls home with a cake for their mothers (the origin of simnel cake) and the girls would gather a posy of wild flowers on their way. So we can see how this developed into the modern idea of "Mothers' Day" with cards, gifts and flowers for mums!

What we shouldn't lose sight of, in the commercialism that surrounds 21st century Mothers' Day, is the fact that we celebrate not only the love and care given by human mothers and those who have any kind of mothering role, but that we also remember the mothering role of the Church.

Jesus, in today's gospel reading, as he commends his mother Mary and his friend John to one another's care, reminds us that mothering is not only about the care of biological mothers for their children, but is also about the way in which we can all "mother" one another, whether mothers (or even female!) or not. This is the role model provided by Jesus and by his Church, especially important at this time, when we seek to rebuild communities following the isolation during the pandemic.

A challenge to us all this Mothering Sunday could be to determine to help build communities in which everybody counts; communities which show compassionate love and care for one another, and in which everyone is nurtured and helped to be the best they can be; communities in which each and every member is listened to and treated with respect and kindness. Wouldn't that truly be kingdom-building!





Mothering Sunday Alphabet Challenge



Can you come up with a Mothering Sunday
themed word for each letter of the alphabet?

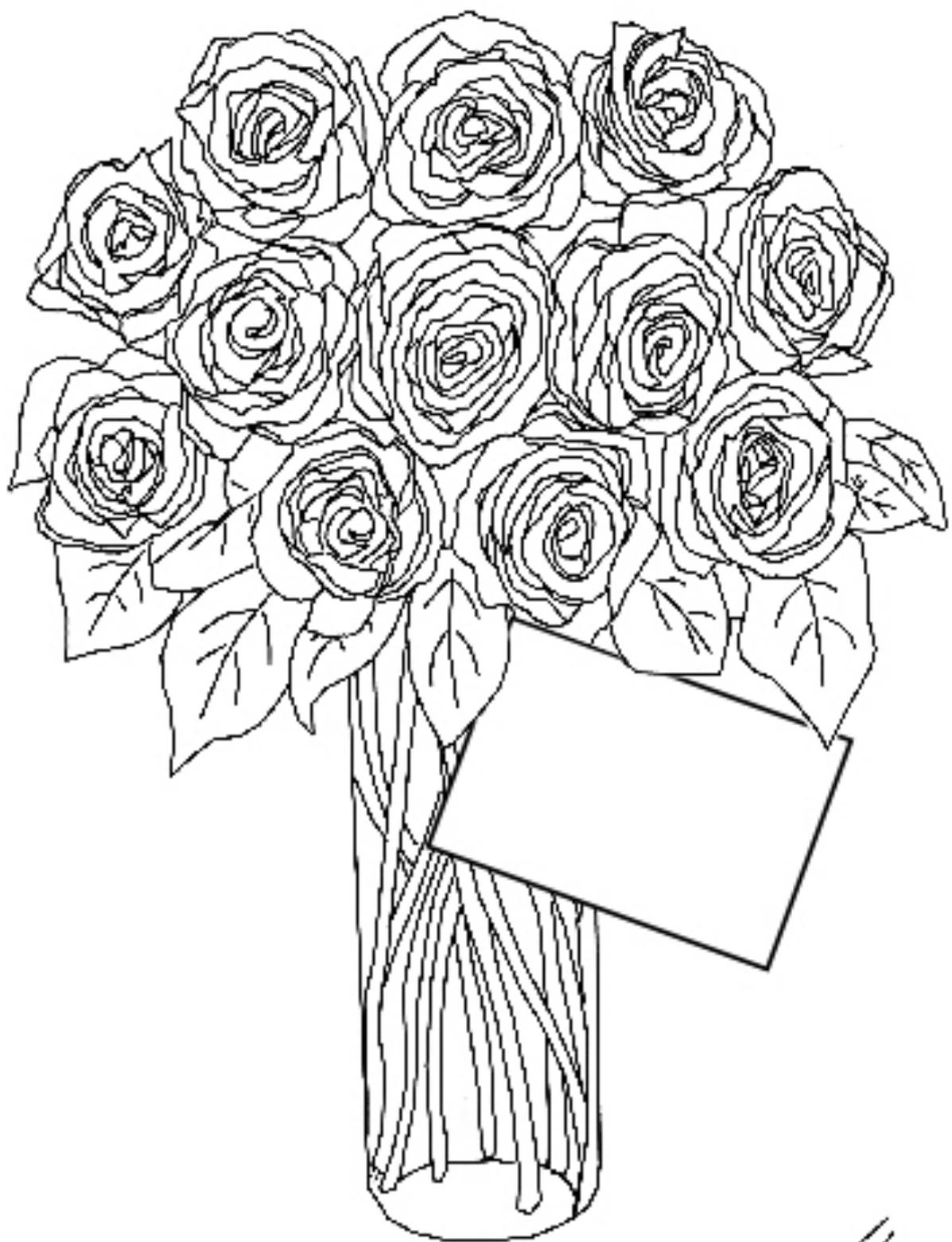
A	_____	N	_____
B	_____	O	_____
C	_____	P	_____
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