

Mothers' Union Newsletter

July 2020

Welcome to my table...

At the centre of my home is my dining room table. Earlier this year, in the expectation that I would be travelling overseas, I arranged for it to be re-polished as many years of faithful service had left it scratched and over time the polished had darkened. Frankly it looked a little shabby and showing its age, like its owner and some of her friends. I bought it on impulse many years ago from a second-hand shop and have always loved the beautiful oak grain inlaid in the top. Until recently, I had forgotten the shop keeper's comments to me... "I think you'll find this is a very special table".

For weeks it left an inconvenient emptiness in my home. How I missed its non-meal functions... a place where I could type whilst looking at the garden or spread out documents for sorting, a good space to use the daily newspaper as a tablecloth whilst eating breakfast. Being not there meant,



no long lunches and conversation with friends.

Whilst it was being restored, I did some research on the table, discovering that it was an oak refectory table made about 1930-40 in England. Being a refectory table, it is narrow in width but long enough to seat 8-10 people when extended. To my surprise I discovered it is quite valuable! It is worth many times the \$400 I paid.

Originally, refectory tables were used in monasteries by members of religious communities for their simple meals at which a member of their community would read from Scripture or some other religious text while they

were eating. It occurred to me that tables have a very significant place in the life of other communities such as a church or perhaps other faiths. Jews gather around a family table to celebrate the Sabbath and Passover, whilst Christians celebrate the Eucharist at a table /altar in a church. In more secular settings tables are often the centre of celebrations for birthdays, weddings, retirement functions, meetings and of course, ordinary family meals.

After about six weeks my table was returned, beautifully polished and ready for use... but we were in Covid19 lock down number 1 and now in lock down 2. Any ideas I had of inviting people to share a meal disappeared. Somehow a ZOOM dinner party had little appeal. What is a meal if you cannot share it with family or friends? A computer image of a meal, although colourful is rather flat and totally without taste or aroma. Why do we love freshly baked bread? Why do people flock to Bunnings BBQs? For the overcooked sausages? No, they are lured by the aroma of fried onions and fresh bread has a taste of its own. So, for the time being my table and I, wait for the opportunity to gather with family and friends to share food and conversation. I wonder how many conversations from the past, how many joys and sorrows, good news and bad and how many meals, this very special table at the centre of my home has shared? I value it now even more for the memories we share and the expectation of better times when meals will be shared face to face, not via a computer screen.

Does your table have a story too? Or is there another item of furniture or decoration in your home which has an interesting story that you would like to share when we finally meet again? Until we can eat together, take care of yourselves. Irene

Mothers' Union Program

The MU Fellowship Groups which we planned for this month, are delayed until government restrictions about social activities are lifted. Thank you to those who were willing to host an afternoon tea gathering. The theme for the July meeting was to be the WAVE of PRAYER. Norma Schultz has prepared some guidance on this which is provided below.

Since the current lock down has been extended into August, we will need to adjust our program as things improve. Our Women's Ministry Conference was to be the feature of our program in August, so we will need to think about how we might reflect on women's ministry while we are confined to our homes.

MU Wave of Prayer Monday July 27th. 1pm

Normally this year in July, we would be joining in the Wave of Prayer service in the chapel. Attached to this MU email, you will receive an Order of Service. To make it a meaningful service in our isolation, it is suggested, if you like, that to enhance your reading of the service that at 1.00 pm on Monday 27th July you read through the Order of Service in a quiet spot where you have set up a focus point maybe with a cross or a candle or even an atlas open at one of the five MU countries for which we will be praying. The centre pages of the current Families Worldwide (No. 26 issue 2.20) has a map showing how the 4 million members of Mothers' Union are distributed across the world. You might use a period of quiet time to meditate on the multiple challenges that other countries experience.

Since 1921, every Diocese in Mothers' Union worldwide is prayed for on three consecutive days each year. This year these days are July 30th- Aug 1st. However, you might choose to use the date on which our MU meeting would have taken place... Monday July 27th. at 1pm. Prepared by Norma Schultz.

MU News items

Belated birthday greetings to **Nora Ashe**, who reached her 21+ some months birthday on July 1st Our **Venerable Dianne** also celebrated her birthday this month which hopefully was a very happy day for her and her family

Phoebe 's operation has been successful, so she is staying at home quietly to recuperate!

Corry has safely reached the one month past her heart operation and is now able to drive again. Unfortunately, there are not many places to go at the moment.

Helene is still in hospital following an infection and is recovering. This month she celebrated her 93rd. Birthday whilst in hospital. No visitors are allowed at Mulgrave Private Hospital due to the Corvid -19 Lockdown.

Presence

*At any time of the day or night we can call on Jesus.
He is always waiting, listening for our call. What a wonderful blessing.
No phone needed, no e-mails, just a whisper.*



THE MASK OF CORVID-19...

Now that we all are to wear masks, remember you are not alone. There is a long history of mask wearing. Some are more interesting than others. If you think about it, you will remember many stories or films or plays in which masks were worn. Do you remember Zorro the masked hero, or Darth Vader or Phantom of the Opera or the many superheros who flew across our TV screens who in addition to a mask usually wore lycra and a cape? Even bandits wore masks in old movies to hide their faces from the police.

What is a Mask?

A mask is an object normally worn on the face, typically for protection, disguise, performance, or entertainment. Masks have been used since antiquity for both ceremonial and practical purposes, as well as in the performing arts and for entertainment.

Like people, they come in many shapes and sizes. Designs may reflect the cultural or creative skills of the wearer. You may recognise some of these famous masks ... A Peking Opera mask, Carnival mask from Venice, a Balaclava sometimes worn by

There is a wonderful website < <https://masksoftheworld.com> > which shows some incredible masks from different cultures. Other websites show creative masks including some made from cabbage leaves or empty food containers, fun but certainly not recommended. My favourite so far, is this young boy in Indonesia, clearly enjoying his animal mask.

The mask you will probably wear will not be quite creative or as interesting but at the moment it is necessary. I have been wearing mine around the garden and only the rhubarb has fainted in horror. Entertain yourself by noting the different types on the street or in the supermarket. Maybe you have made and designed your own. With numbers of cases rising, we all need to keep ourselves and others safe. One more piece of Covid -19 advice... a Corvid chuckle thanks to Marg Taylor .

