

Thoughts from your President, Maxine Paul



Well, I can't believe I'm back already and Easter is but days away. What a lovely time I had though... After my last newsletter we visited two more ports in Australia – Cairns and Port Douglas, an Indonesian island, Manila in the Philippines and Hong Kong briefly during a stop-over on the flight home. A totally different experience in each place.

The Great Barrier Reef and its amazing corals to just wonder at; the friendliness of the awe-struck people of Sulawesi who spent the whole day on the dockside (mostly in pouring rain) singing and dancing for us and with us, posing with us for their photo albums and even asking for autographs; the stunning sunrise in Manila Bay and the opulence of the roaring twenties-style Manila Hotel followed by the joy of being reunited with our son for Mothering Sunday and seeing the naïve artistry of the petroglyphs (cave etchings) made by some of the earliest peoples of SE Asia dating back to before 2000BC; the huge crowds of central Hong Kong piling onto the world's longest escalator and the extravagance of the newest shopping mall.

I have experienced God's goodness in so many ways from the sights, sounds and smells of the natural world to the sheer ability to be able to see it all.

BUT... this was all tempered by the shock of the desperate lives experienced by some of the world's poorest living in shanties near the docks in Manila and scavenging for plastic sheeting and bottles, glass, tin cans and cardboard to sell to be recycled for a few pesos – 1kg of plastic for the equivalent of just 30p. Even here though, there is cause to thank God for His goodness by sending Jane Walker to set up the Purple Community Fund (known locally as the Upskills Foundation) which is bringing some relief through providing a sales platform for the bags and jewellery the women make from the ring-pulls off the cans collected for recycling; for training some of the men to make shoes out of the inner tubes of dumped tyres so every child has a pair of shoes to go to school in which means they are more likely to go to school and also enabling the older children to go to high school and graduate with skills to help lift them out of the situation. The Fund also provides lunch for the elderly (none of whom are state-supported, of course) who in turn, inevitably, save half of their food for their grandchildren; organises the distribution of "pag pag" (food discarded by restaurants) and runs a medical centre two days a week amongst other things. Unsurprisingly, they didn't take credit cards, so we could only give cash – all our local currency plus all our English pounds which was not very much in the grand scheme of things or anything like enough leaving us with no cash in our pockets and having to borrow off our son for the rest of the holiday – a small price to pay.



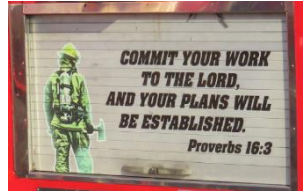
Unfortunately, it's not an MU project, but I have been supporting the project through Emmanuel Church, Billericay just by collecting ring-pulls for a couple of years – simple enough. I would encourage you all to save your ring-pulls to give me or your VP or Emmanuel Church, so we can, at least, do a bit to help. You can find out more at <https://www.p-c-f.org/> and buy the really interesting products they make. Please pray for the people of The Philippines who are full of hope.



So, as Easter approaches, we turn our eyes to The Cross and wonder, yet again, at the miracle of Easter as a testament to God's love and power. I pray that you may experience this mighty love in your life.

With love. Maxine x

I've just heard from Kathryn that you have placed your confidence in me for a second term of three years and that Bishop Guli has also approved. Thank you, so much. I feel truly humbled and blessed to be able to continue to serve you xx



COMMIT YOUR WORK TO THE LORD, AND YOUR PLANS WILL BE ESTABLISHED.
Proverbs 16:3

On the side of a Filipino fire engine

Lady Day – 8th April

This year Lady Day will be celebrated on April 8th. A Lady Day service plan can be found at <https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/Lady%20Day%202024.pdf>

With God nothing is impossible: Transformation – Now!

Mothers' Union at UNCSW, 11th March 2024

A joint delegation of Mothers' Union and the Anglican Communion attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and advocated for:



- Funding of adult female literacy programmes, to enable women to lift themselves and their families out of poverty increase their self-esteem; improve the wellbeing of their communities and reduce Gender Based violence.
- Engagement with faith-based organisations to implement grassroots, transformational programmes which are sustainable, because they are anchored in their communities and act as volunteers, often in the hardest to reach, most marginalized communities.
- Reform of global financial injustice.

Read the full story at www.mothersunion.org/news/mothers-union-uncsw-68-0.

Clewer Initiative

The Clewer Initiative was established in 2016 to raise awareness and mobilise the Church and communities to take action against modern slavery, promote victim identification, and provide victim care and support. The Clewer Initiative are currently seeking new sources of funding to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project. They are encouraging all their supporters to:

- Pray for funding to enable the vital work of the Clewer Initiative to continue
- Pass on the Crowdfunding link to others in their network www.gofundme.com/f/help-our-vital-work-continue
- Visit the Fundraising page on their website and find out more about their vision for the future <https://theclewerinitiative.org/who-we-are/fundraising>

Thy Kingdom Come – 9th -19th May

As part of this year's Thy Kingdom Come, Mothers' Union is asking members to 'pray for five, invite one', encouraging us to use this as an opportunity to invite one individual each to a Mothers' Union event. For more information visit www.mothersunion.org/ThyKingdomCome

Provincial Gathering – 22nd June

The Provincial Gathering is due to take place at the King's Centre Oxford on 22nd June. The event information pack has been circulated to all branches. Tickets at £20 each are now on sale through the following link www.ticketsource.co.uk/mothers-union If you are planning to attend and would like to coordinate on travel arrangements, please let secretary Kathryn know.

News from Mary Sumner House

The new MU Safeguarding Policy for Britain & Ireland has been adopted by British Provinces. Training is being rolled out to Safeguarding Champions, DPs and interested safeguarding leads from April. Specific training e.g. AFIA, work in prisons, will be delivered from June.

All members should now have received their Spring edition of Connected. If you haven't received yours please contact the diocesan secretary (secretary@muchelmsford.org.uk)

For regular updates on central MU work, sign up to the central e-newsletter on this link: <https://mothersuniononline.org/p/1I8Y-G0K/sign-up-to-the-mothers-union-mailing-list>

Dates for the dairy

- Jan 2023 - Dec 2024 RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse 365 days of the year
- 8th April - Lady Day
- Thy Kingdom Come – 9th -19th May <https://www.mothersunion.org/ThyKingdomCome>
- 5th June (evening) - Provisional Spring Members Meeting, Chapter House
- 22nd June - Canterbury Provincial Gathering
- 18th November - Provisional AGM and Annual Thanksgiving Service, Cathedral

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