



May 2020

Dear Members

At this vastly different time for the world around us, I send my heartfelt greetings to you. You are constantly in my prayers, certain that our dear Lord and Saviour is surrounding you with his love and is ever present with you on your journey.

The Year of Pilgrimage has encountered an obstacle on its way. In January, when we launched our Mothers' Union Book of Pilgrimage with its timetable around the branches, we did not envisage that in the space of a few months, that it would come to a halt. Many of the Tedi Pererin Bears are taking a rest until they can continue their journey, and this applies to our MU Bear, Pererin Mair (Pilgrim Bear Mary).

The pandemic has become part of our own personal pilgrimage as we reflect on how our Lord Jesus Christ is with us on our journey; loving, supporting and guiding us through the highs and lows of the enforced lockdown, the inability to meet family and friends, unable to attend our beloved churches and the lack of Mothers' Union meetings.

We are a pilgrim people and our destiny is heaven. As we travel towards the light of Christ, may we encourage one another through life's rough seas and stone-filled paths.

It is now in the month of May, a highlight of our Diocesan calendar, when we meet as members to celebrate God's abundant grace and love to Mothers' Union members in our Deanery Festivals.

We must look forward and with God's guidance, we can still meet in prayer as members of our Deaneries. Reverend Sandra Birdsall, our MU Chaplain, has provided a **Deanery Prayer Chain Service** (which is available on our website, emailed or posted to members not on the internet) whereby members in the Deanery can join in the service, on the day and at the time of the proposed Deanery Festival (afternoon or evening). We ask that Area Deans and the clergy who would have been involved in the Deanery Festivals are provided with a copy of this service.

The service is based on the Mothers' Union theme of **Building Hope and Confidence** and contains readings, reflections and prayers.

Each Deanery is asked to pray for their **own** Deanery and for the **next** Deanery on the calendar, similar to the wave of prayer and the timetable of Deanery Festivals is provided in the service sheet.

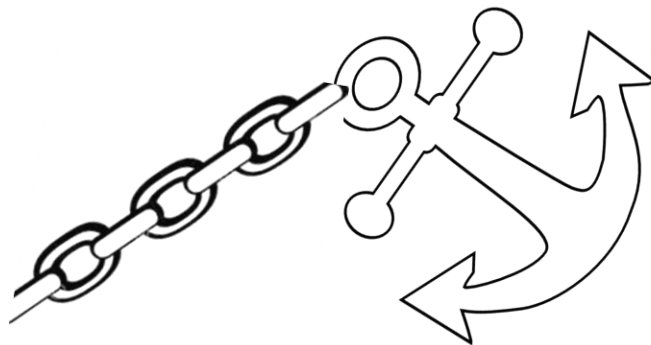
Individual members are asked to **make a link for a paper chain** and to write a prayer, a verse from the Bible, a line from a favourite hymn or poem on the link. The link can be made from any paper, card, old envelopes etc. The size does not matter. Members will bring these links to their Branch meeting after the lockdown.

Dear Lord.....



Branch leaders will join the links to form a branch chain and bring them to the first Deanery Meeting after the lockdown and attach them to an Anchor. Deanery Leaders have been provided with a template of an anchor, so that chains can be attached. We are hopeful that there will be a Eucharist in Llandaff Cathedral at some time before the end of the year, where members across the Diocese can come together and worship, with Deanery Leaders bringing the Anchors and chains to be blessed at this service.

This symbolic gesture reflects God's love and promise and encourages us to take hold of the hope that we have. This hope is like a firm and steady anchor for our souls.



Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

I am extremely grateful to our Mothers' Union Diocesan Chaplain, Revd. Sandra for providing us with regular devotions. These are widely disseminated across the diocese to members and non-members and the Trustee Board have received many messages, reflecting how much these devotions are highly valued and provide much spiritual support to members during this anxious time. These devotions will continue on a twice weekly basis for as long as they are required, during this lockdown.

Our Archdeaconry Eucharists planned for June and July have been cancelled but we have hope that the Archdeaconry Eucharist planned for Monday 14 September may still be a possibility, but we will follow the Government's advice and the safety and wellbeing of our members will be paramount in any decisions that we make regarding future events.

I look forward with great joy, to the time when we can meet together again, joining in prayer and fellowship. Until then, you continue to be in my prayers, and I wish you well for your very different Deanery Festivals.

God of love and understanding we thank you for the members in our deaneries and for the common concern for marriage and family life, which binds us together. We pray that we will continue to enjoy each other's friendship, to work together in love and to encourage each other with the hope of Jesus Christ. Amen

With my love and prayers,
Sue Rivers
Diocesan President