



On the fourth Sunday in Lent, from about the sixteenth century, it had been a tradition for families to attend a church service in the nearest important church or cathedral - their 'Mother' church. Attending the church service together was a rare occasion for families to gather as one, and members of the family who worked on that day were often given the day off, so they could also attend the service.

Anyone who did this was commonly said to have gone "a-mothering."

"In homes of the landed gentry, the housekeeper or cook would often allow the maids to bake a fruitcake called "simnel cake" to take home for their mothers. Sometimes a gift of eggs or flowers from the garden (or hothouse) was allowed."

(adapted from https://canadianmothersunion.ca/mothering_sunday)

Children and young people who were given a day off on that date would pick wild flowers, especially violets, along the way to place in the church or give to their mothers. Eventually, the religious tradition evolved into the Mothering Sunday secular tradition of giving gifts to mothers, but by the early 20th century the custom of keeping Mothering Sunday had tended to lapse in most of Europe.

Mother's Day Beginnings

On May 10th, 1908, an American named Anna Jarvis held a memorial to honour her own mother and all mothers at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia. This event marked the first official observance of Mother's Day and the church was later designated as the International Mother's Day Shrine and is a Historic Landmark in the United States.

In 1914, US President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May as the official date for the observance of a national day to celebrate mothers and Canada followed suit in 1915.

Revival of Mothering Sunday

Inspired by Anna Jarvis's efforts, Constance Penswick-Smith in the United Kingdom created the Mothering Sunday Movement and, in 1921, she wrote a book asking for the revival of the festival, due in large part through the influence of American and Canadian soldiers serving abroad during World War II. The original traditions were merged with the newly imported American tradition, and by the 1950s Mothering Sunday was celebrated once again across the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries, including Canada.

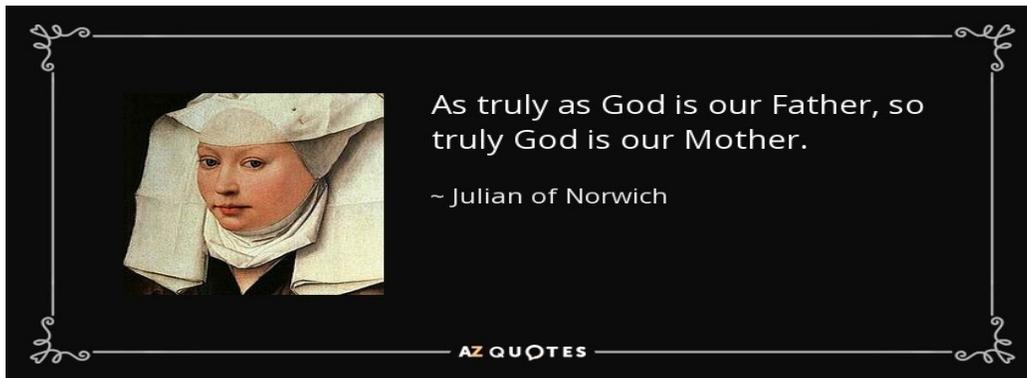
Today Mothering Sunday is a popular day when Christians choose to use the occasion to think about all things which concern motherhood. It is also a time to pray for mothers who are bereaved of their children, estranged from their children, women who wish to have children but cannot, and mothers in abusive domestic situations. We give thanks for the Church as Mother, the Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus, we remember that God cares for us like a mother, and we give thanks for our own mothers.

Mothering Sunday is a time of special thanksgiving.

It is the one day of joy in Lent, when people are allowed a time off from the penitential season. It is also known as Laetare Sunday which means "rejoice." Other names are Mid-Lent Sunday (since the date of the festival falls half way between Shrove Tuesday and Good Friday), Refreshment Sunday, and Rose Sunday.

In the fourteenth century Julian of Norwich, the first woman to write in modern English, experienced and understood the motherhood of God in her visions.

Mothering Sunday is a good day to share her vision and recognize that, although we are distinguished by our gender, God is not. Instead God is both mother and father to us.



**Loving God,
Thank you for mums and children
and for all the joy of family life.
Be with those who are grieving because they have no mother;
Be close to those who are struggling because they have no
children;
Be near to those who are sad because they are far apart from
those they love.
Let your love be present in every home,
And help your church to have eyes to see and ears to hear the
needs of all who come.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

(The Church of England: A prayer for Mothering Sunday)

Recipe for Simnel Cake (Canadian Recipe)

Ingredients:

3/4 cup soft butter
3/4 cup sugar
4 eggs
1/2 tsp almond extract
2 cups raisins
1 cup currants
1/2 cup mixed peel
1/3 cup chopped candied cherries
2 tsp lemon rind
2 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
500 grams of almond paste, at room temperature

Directions:

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs 1 at a time. Add almond extract. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add to eggs, then add the fruit and mix. Put 1/2 the mixture in an 8" springform pan lined with paper. Roll half of almond paste and place in pan. Spoon remainder of batter on top. Bake 30 min at 350°F then reduce heat to 300°F and bake 1 1/2 hours longer. Cool 10 min. Heat oven to 425°F. Roll remaining almond paste into an 8" round circle and 12 small balls. Put the circle on top of the cake and place the balls on top like the numbers on a clock. These represent the 12 apostles minus Judas, who betrayed Christ. When 12 balls are used, the 12th one is to represent Jesus or another disciple. Bake for 8 min watching closely so the balls do not flatten too much or burn.

Source: https://canadianmothersunion.ca/mothering_sunday