

**COVID-19 – A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM MOTHERS' UNION WORLDWIDE
PRESIDENT SHERAN HARPER**



My beloved MU Family across the oceans, and from near and far,

I greet you with the love and courage of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour because He is our strength, our hope and our solid rock.

So much has been happening recently as COVID-19 is declared a pandemic and governments are advising that we take the necessary precautions to avoid the spread of the virus. There is so much we have to come to terms with in such a short time.

One of our faithful members, Dianne, went to deliver groceries to her mum who is self-isolating after recent travel. She was in tears as she dropped the groceries at the doorstep and watched her mum through the window with no chance of a hug.

There are so many similar stories including those of people who are ill or afraid, lonely or isolated.

And in times like these I encourage you to **take heart** and **do not fear** because the Lord, your God is by your side - an ever present help in times of trouble.

In the book of Joshua Chapter 1 verse 9 we read,

I hereby command you: be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Amen.

As members you are bold and brave, full of courage and compassion, and so very loving and just like Esther you stand daily on the frontline calling for an end to injustices and advocating for all that supports stable families and communities.

You have been busy in these acts of love but now many of you are being called to be quiet and to self-isolate in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus. You will discover there is still so much we can do as members because as a movement we are ideally placed to support and act in this time, but only within the health advice given by your respective governments.

Now here are a few practical ideas to start with and there are seven of them:

1. Pray and intercede for everyone including the health care professionals, the sick, the isolated, the bereaved and all those directly involved in finding a cure for this coronavirus.
2. Pray and spend time listening to God, strengthening your relationship with him, reading his word and sharing it with others.
3. Families Worldwide is an excellent resource to guide your prayers for members across the globe and the stories in Families First can open a good conversation. I can assure you that using these two resources will give the feeling of love and togetherness.
4. Our trustees have been using WhatsApp to encourage, support and pray for one another – you can use it in the same way and additionally even share a new recipe, prayer requests and messages of encouragement.
5. Facetime and Skype are other options so the family can still feel near to each other ... even with physical distance. Board games and other activities can keep the children and grandchildren occupied too. Even saying hello to neighbours at a particular time each day could bring great excitement.
6. For those who are able to - delivering groceries, medication and running errands within the parameters of keeping safe is very useful for those who cannot go out
7. Your church may start streaming services and mid-week online prayers. Why not join in. You could even start streaming a Branch Meeting if you're feeling very adventurous! And that is one I would certainly do!

As I close, I leave you with the encouraging words from 2 Corinthians Chapter 12 reading verse 9 and 10. Such reassuring words.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Brothers and sisters let us pray together

Lord Jesus Christ,

you said to your disciples,

I am with you always, even to the end of time

Be with me today Lord, as I offer myself to you.

Hear my prayers for others and for myself,

And keep me in your tender loving care always. Amen.