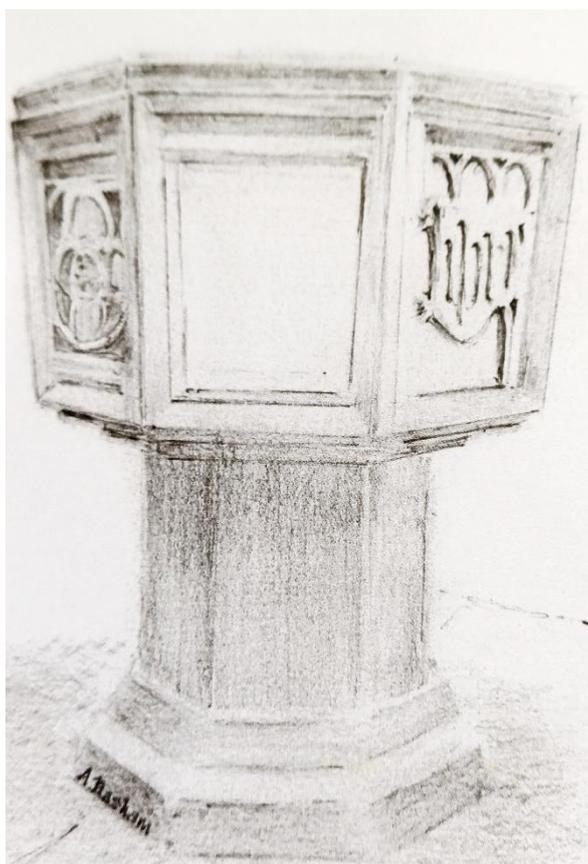


N.I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. **Amen.**

Just pause and put your name in this declaration giving thanks for your baptism



Last month my cousin sent me a card showing the font of Holy Trinity, Bolton-le-sands where I was baptised on Trinity Sunday; Mum and Dad's first wedding anniversary. At a small family gathering I began my Christian journey.

In this year of celebrating 150 years of Mothers' Union it started me thinking about Mary Sumner's Christian journey and where that all began.

Mary began her Christian journey just a little way south of my home town in Eccles and 151 years earlier; alongside two other children on

26th December, St. Stephen's Day, 1829

It was by necessity for many families to celebrate weddings and baptisms on Christmas day and Boxing Day, being the only holidays they had, Christmas dinner being also the wedding feast. I found out that my great grandmother was married on Boxing Day.

So, here is the entry for Mary Elizabeth Heywood all those years ago

[Page 73.]

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <u>Eccles</u> in the County of <u>Lancaster</u> in the Year 18 <u>29</u> .						
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents' Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1829 December 26 No. 577.	Mary Elizabeth Daughter of	Thomas & Elizabeth	Heywood	Whinton in Worsley	Gentleman	Thos Blackburne

Just like me and so many others in those days we were baptised using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer:

“Mary Elizabeth, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. **Amen.**

...We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's flock, *and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. **Amen.**”

This was indeed the spiritual path Mary was to follow being a true servant of Christ and as today the movement she founded 150 years ago still fights to stop injustice, poverty and violence.

This month we celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick, a Celtic saint whose hymn, an invocation to the Holy Trinity holds a section which echoes what was to become Mary Sumner's daily Prayer.

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in the eye of everyone that sees me,
Christ in the ear of everyone that hears me.

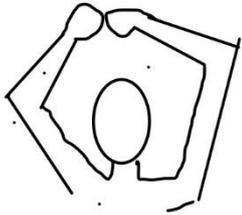
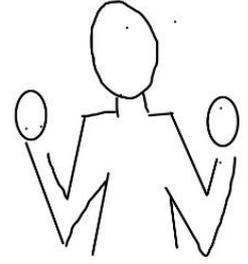
I bind to myself to-day,
The strong power of an invocation of the Trinity,
The faith of the Trinity in Unity
The Creator of the Elements.

So I end with a way of praying this prayer using just three words and four actions



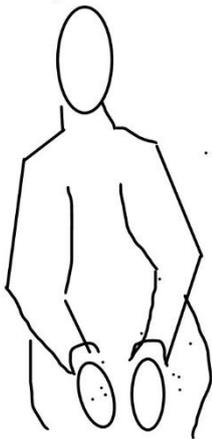
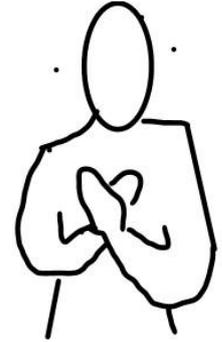
"God is here"

Begin with hands upright, facing inwards, elbows waist height: "God"
Beside me, all around me.



Then raising hands above your head, or just turning upwards, let your eyes follow, "is"
Above me

Then lower your hands to cross over your heart, " here"
*Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in the eye of everyone that sees me,
Christ in the ear of everyone that hears me.*



Finally lay your hands, face down on your lap, "God "

- (I often just sit in this position in the midst of a busy day, quietly rejoicing in God's presence as I pray the words, "God is here")

*Christ beneath me, on the path I tread
I bind to myself to-day,*

The strong power of an invocation of the Trinity,

The faith of the Trinity in Unity

The Creator of the Elements. " is "

- (If you have time, slowly repeat the sequence until the movement returns to the beginning.)

As we travel through Lent, I think back to the St. Stephen's Day hymn, when the King set out with his servant following in his footsteps, going out into the harsh elements, seeking out the poor and the needy.

How fitting that Mary Sumner was baptised on that feast as her life continues to inspire us to go out on the breath of a prayer to serve each day.

We pray Mary's daily prayer,

O blessed Lord, all this day may I touch as many lives as possible for Thee and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen.

150 YEARS OF
Mothers UNION
Join us, Join in

Lighting the way for
generations to come

