

May I speak in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Right, I have some clues as to what today's talk is going to be about.

Peruvian Flag

Red Wellies

Marmalade

Please Look after this bear Label.

Yes, that's right today's talk is about Paddington. So what has Paddington bear got to do with the wonderful pictures we have on display at the back of the church, that the children from school have drawn of the people who mother them.

Whether you know this loveable bear from books, tv or from the recent two films. I am sure the sight of this bear with his very special label will be a familiar sight to many of us.

But for those of us who are not familiar with the stories here is a brief synopsis of how it all starts, Paddington Bear comes from Deepest Darkest Peru in South America. Paddington lives with his Aunt Lucy and his Uncle Pastuzo. A huge devastating earthquake happens and flattens their home along with their marmalade making machine. Uncle Pastuzo sadly dies in this disaster and that leaves Aunt Lucy and Paddington all alone. Now we don't know what has happened to Paddington's Mum. But Aunt Lucy takes on the role of Mum right from the start.

I wonder if you can imagine what it must have felt like for Aunt Lucy and Paddington. Nowhere to live all alone in the deepest darkest Jungle in Peru. This is where Aunt Lucy does something very brave.

Now For those of you, who know the stories
body know what Aunt Lucy does now?

Yes, that's right she puts Paddington on to a
lifeboat of a big Ship and sends him in his iconic
Blue Duffel coat with Uncle Pastuzo hat to
London. I don't think she knows anyone in
London but she is hoping that someone,
somewhere will look after her precious bear, In
fact, that's what she writes on the label that she
pins onto his coat on a luggage tag.

Please look after this bear.

Paddington finds himself in London at
Paddington Station and that's where he meets
the Brown Family, Mr and Mrs Brown and their
Children Johnathon and Judy.

Paddington has huge adventures in London but
always remembers to let Aunt Lucy know about

what is happening. He often sends Postcards to her in the Home for Retired bears where she now lives or he will stick something in his scrapbook with the intention of showing her one day.

Paddington may now be far away from his Aunt Lucy but he still remains deeply connected to her, she is part of him and although his new family The Browns take good care of him and are very important to him. Aunt Lucy will always remain part of who he is.

So now I have a question, why did Aunt Lucy send Paddington away to London, a dangerous journey on board ship that would have taken possibly weeks.

Yes, she gave him another chance at life, at happiness. I know it's just a story but I can't imagine the heartache and the pain that poor Aunt Lucy must have gone through making the decision to send a Paddington away from her on

the sea. Michael Bond the man who wrote Paddington Bear's inspiration was seeing the Luggage labels on the evacuees who had been sent away from London during the Second World War. The evacuees had been sent by their families to a place of safety.

Now I wonder if any of you can think of a bible story where a mother does a similar thing?

Yes, the story of Moses. Moses' mum Jochabed, puts him in a basket sets him out on an adventure down the Nile hoping that someone will fish him out of the river and look after him. Moses's New Mum. The Egyptian princess takes him out of the water and treats him as her own. The story of Moses could have ended up so differently but of course, God was watching out for him. God had it in hand he made sure that the right person at the right time was there to look after Moses. That was an Egyptian princess, somebody who wasn't part of Moses

family and certainly not of the same ethnic background

Both the story of Paddington and the Story of Moses, give us really good examples that families are not as neat and as tidy as we would like them to be. Even now, many of us have a tendency to think that family consist of a Mum and Dad and 2.4 children.

Of course, 2.4 children is an impossibility. It can't happen and that is the problem with figures like that. They can give us an idea but they don't reflect the actual reality of situations.

Families are so more complicated, there are parents, step-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles. I know growing up I had Aunts and Uncles that weren't even related to me but were good family friends. Bleddyn my 10 years old life so far away from his biological grandparents, that a lady in my Husbands' congregation has become his adopted Granny.

My own grandmother back in the 1920's mum's died when she was 6 months old and then

through a catalogue of illness and death ended up having 3 step mums.

The saying it takes a village to raise a child is really important, it's not just the responsibility of those who are immediate family to help raise children.

Families don't just have to be biological. We here in Church are a family, ok so we are not related to each other by our own blood. But we are related to each other because as it says in the baptism liturgy we are all sons and daughter of the same heavenly Father.

This is why the reading for today is so important it's really short so Let me read that again:

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple.

“Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Even in Jesus’ last moments on the cross, his concern is still for others for two people that he cares for deeply, his mother and his disciple. Jesus is doing this creates a new family, makes sure that the disciple cares for his mother and that his mother has someone to nurture, sustain and care for in return.

Mothering doesn’t have to be done just by mothers but can be done by everybody following the pattern of God’s nurturing, care and attention, this love that he wants to pour out on to every one of us.

So I wonder, who do you have that has cared for you and loved you in your life? I wonder who God has placed in your life to help show you how to love? Paddington had Aunt Lucy and the Browns, but he also had all the people around him who he encountered in his day to day life, often by smiling and caring for them, telling them the time, holding doors open, showing that he genuinely cares about the people

around him. Moses had his Mother and the Egyptian princess. Jesus made sure that before he died he created a new family for his mother and his disciple.

After I have finished speaking we are going to be giving flowers out, these flowers are for everyone, not just mothers, not just women. God is neither Male or Female so perhaps we should see that nurturing in the role of everyone. So today, as we celebrate Mothering Sunday not Mother's day, let us give thanks for everyone who helps to grow. Amen

