

Mothers' Union Worldwide President's Mary Sumner Day Message

9th August 2020

Hello members and friends – I am Sharon Harper, your worldwide president, and today, August 9th, is a very special day in the calendar for the Mother's Union family. Today we commemorate and celebrate the life and legacy of our founder, an incredible lady called Mary Sumner.

It is a beautiful and sunny day here in Guyana, and I hope it is the same for our members in Winchester diocese, as they gather to lay flowers at Mary Sumner's grave.

Last week I asked a few members in different countries, “How does Mary Sumner inspire you?” and the answers were basically the same: they said she pushed doors that had not been pushed before, and she was courageous in the strength of God to change the part of the world that she was a part of.

I remember chairing my first trustee board meeting in the Mary Sumner room and looking up at the huge portrait of Mary Sumner, I asked myself, “What is it about this incredibly strong lady that inspires me and drives me to be passionate about making a difference?” and I discovered it's her humility and her determination to do what's right, despite the challenges. It is her belief that if women of all social classes unite, they can move mountains together, they can change communities and transform nations. I realized it's her quiet confident smile and her selfless acts of love and courage that inspire me.

Nearly 150 years later four million members continue to be inspired by Mary Sumner. Our testimony lies in our transformational work right at the heart of the communities. What comes to mind immediately is our campaigning for policies which strengthen family life, and having the courage to call out injustice in support of the vulnerable. Even as we celebrate Mary Sumner Day today our members across the globe are taking a stand against gender-based violence and they are saying, “We have had enough! Gender-based violence must end now, God's love must shine through.”

My friends, Mary Sumner's legacy belongs to each and every one of us: we are a part of the rich Mothers' Union tradition, a tradition with its infusion of diverse cultures, countless God-given gifts and faith in action in a changing world – and when this is shared generously, it makes a huge difference. It is a tradition that has weathered and survived the storms, teaching us to be resilient, and at the same time Mothers' Union has provided members and communities with important streams of living water which continue to flow from generation to generation.

On behalf of the worldwide trustee board and all at Mary Sumner House, I wish you a happy and blessed Mary Sumner Day. God bless you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzlgAMjPoyg>

Transcript based on YouTube transcript.