

Often when I have to remember something I will write a note in biro on the palm of my hand. That works well as long as I transfer the reminder to something more permanent before I wash my hands! When I fail to do that I am often seen staring at my hand trying to decipher the faded writing! With the health routine we all have to adopt at present I not only get chapped hands, but I'm in danger of losing all my reminders!

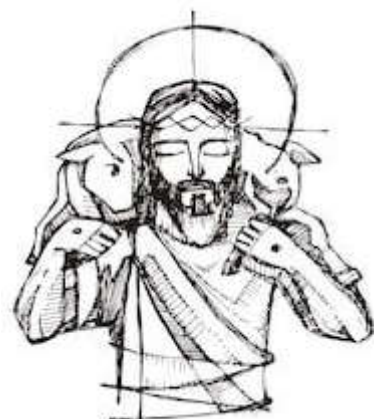


Mothering Sunday always reminds me of some words from the Old Testament: **Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.'** *Can a woman forget her nursing-child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands ..* Isaiah 49:14-16

We are told that our God doesn't just write us on the palms of his hand, he inscribes us there. If God actually had flesh and blood hands to wash he wouldn't forget us, because no matter how hard he scrubbed we would still be *engraved* – thoroughly water-proof!

Harry Potter fans will recall how Professor Umbrage punished Harry in 'Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix': *He let out a gasp of pain. The words had appeared on the parchment in what appeared to be shining red ink. At the same time, the words had appeared on the back of Harry's right hand, cut into his skin as though traced there by a scalpel — yet even as he stared at the shining cut, the skin healed over again, leaving the place where it had been slightly redder than before but quite smooth... He looked back at the parchment, placed the quill upon it once more, wrote "I must not tell lies", and felt the searing pain on the back of his hand for a second time; once again, the words had been cut into his skin, once again they healed over seconds later. And on it went. Again and again Harry wrote the words on the parchment in what he soon came to realise was not ink, but his own blood. And again and again the words were cut into the back of his hand, healed, and then reappeared the next time he set quill to parchment.* Harry, who actually had told no lies, thereafter had to hide the back of his hands from his friends.

If God actually had flesh and blood hands ... But of course the wonderful thing is that he does! *Hands that flung stars into space to cruel nails surrendered.* Those hands were nailed to a cross even though he too had told no lies: and when he appeared to his friends after his death they saw the marks the nails had made in his hands. When the risen, ascended and glorified Jesus is portrayed in art he still bears, as he does in reality, the marks of the nails; and when he looks upon them he sees you and me.



So when you wash your chapped hands – when you are shut in and unable to get out – when you are anxious remember the Lord who holds you in the palms of his hands. He will never forget you – he who is the best of all mothers.

For those who prefer Country & Western to Harry Potter might like to listen to the following: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgpFL424Mfg> or something more familiar:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xC3Cmj45FE>

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