

Do you know how many hearts an octopus has?

I'll give you three options: The answer is one, two or three. If you said 3, you were right. Three hearts – crazy huh – imagine a human having three hearts beating inside them at the same time. I wonder how that would feel. Well, amazingly there is someone in our church who, at one point in their life did have three hearts beating inside her – I wonder if you can guess who this person is. It's Rossy – when she was pregnant with Robert and Sophia there were 3 hearts beating inside her. Her own, obviously, and Robert's and Sophia's.

I still feel completely awestruck when I think of that idea – the idea that my heart was once beating inside me and I was inside my mum. When psalm 139 says *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*, I get where the writer is coming from – how can we not be full of wonder about how all of our parts are knitted together and how we come to even be here.

There is Divinity in all of us – we are all a part of God's creation – a part of this God of wonder that nothing we can say or write can quite capture, a God of glory that transcends the limits of language. So we call God. 'Father', but obviously in this we mean 'Father', 'Mother', 'Creator' – we don't have human words for God, so we do the best we can.

In fact, few weeks ago, during one of her talks, Mother Juliet asked us what we pictured, or what words came to mind when we thought of God; we said things like: 'creator', 'protector' and 'awesome'.

And so today is Mother's Day. A day when we honour our Mums, our Grandmas, our Aunties and those people who take on the role of Mums in our lives.

So in honour of Mother's Day I decided to choose a random bunch of people and ask them on WhatsApp to message me the first word they thought of when they heard (or read) the word 'Mum'.

The people I chose were a mixed bunch – family, friends from work, children, church friends and friends I have known since school or university. And when I say the people I chose were 'a mixed bunch', obviously if I chose you, what I mean by that is: I chose the cream of the crop. (Love you Mother Juliet!).

Can you guess what the most popular word was?

Let's have a look at the results chart:

In this chart, the more times someone used a word when they thought of 'Mum', the bigger the word is.



So here you can see that people think of Mums in lots of different ways – my older brother was really honest about his word being ‘homework’. He said, ‘I have so many memories of homework conversations’ – I think a lot of us can relate to that: parents and children – especially at the moment when so many of us have been trying to do our best with home-schooling.

And which poor Mum is being described in the words; ‘washing-up-type-stuff’? Yeah, that would be me. And it was a very accurate description of me by David, as I was doing ‘washing-up-type-stuff’ when I asked him to describe me!

And the word that most people used. The word that the first person who replied to my text message messaged back in about two seconds was Mum= Love. The word that sprang to the minds of most people was....love....

And so today is Mother’s Day and the way so many people chose to describe those who take on the role of Mums in their lives is ‘Love’.

And what does the Bible say about love?

Can you think of any quotes from the Bible about love?

Well there’s one in our Gospel reading today – ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only son’.

And who can think of any more?

Love your neighbour as yourself

The greatest of these is love

God is love

All you need is love maybe that was the Beatles

Our world is amazing and awesome and so difficult to understand at times. It's difficult to explain in one word. Just like when I asked them for a single word to describe their Mum, lots of people wrote back to me saying it was impossible to describe their mum in just one word– a very good friend of mine messaged a word, then deleted it, then messaged two different words, writing, '....this is harder than I thought.... Devotion and trust... sorry, can't choose just one!'. But that's OK – of course it's really hard to put our feelings into words. But it's in the search for those feelings and those words that we get closer to God.

God is love. God is our Father, and our Mother – on this Mother's day, we can put a human word to God – the closest one that we've got – and the one so many people used to describe their idea of what a Mum is. God is Love. You are loved. Happy Mother's Day.

