

The Living Word

Fifth Sunday of Lent A, Year A

29 March 2020

First Reading Ez 37:12-14

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 129. R. v. 7

(R.) With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading. (R.)
2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you. (R.)
3. My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.
(Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.) (R.)
4. Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption, Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity. (R.)

Second Reading Rom 8:8-11

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he will give life to your own mortal bodies.

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

Gospel Acclamation See Jn 11:25. 26

**Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Gospel Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45 or longer form Jn 11:1-45

I am the resurrection and the life.

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.

If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak

for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

This Gospel tells us that Our Lord was moved with compassion in an almost violent way, raging against the seeming finality of death. The raising of Lazarus was a demonstration of his power to rob death of its supposed supremacy.

But, Our Lord did not set Lazarus completely free! You may think that to be raised from the dead was not a bad start, but Lazarus was still shuffling: bound, constrained, constricted by the past. To those gathered around the tomb Jesus issued the command: 'Set him free, unbind him.' It was the collective effort of others which enabled Lazarus to walk as a liberated son of God.

You may find yourself commanded by the Lord to help unbind a person who has had a deadening experience which has drained them of life. We get the courage to respond because it is the command of the One who definitively conquered death.

We could pause for a moment to resolve to help liberate others already helped by the grace of Him whom we believe to be *the Resurrection and the Life*.

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Prayers of the Faithful for 5th Sunday Lent 2020.

Priest

Dear friends, with Martha we hail Jesus as the Christ, Son of God and giver of life. In his name let us pray for all our needs.

Reader

1. We pray for civic leaders and health authorities around the world. May they guide their people through this global health crisis with wisdom and courage. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
2. We pray for those suffering directly from the spread of COVID-19: all who have lost loved ones, those who are fighting for their lives, and the frail aged. May they draw strength from the support of the whole community. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
3. We pray for those facing financial ruin or extreme hardship as a result of the health crisis. May government measures and the work of welfare agencies bring them relief. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
4. We pray for health workers of every kind in hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. May they remain safe and well in the face of the extraordinary demands being made of them. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
5. We pray for a spirit of neighbourly love. May we not yield to fear and self-interest but choose to put ourselves at the service of others. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
6. We pray for the people of Malawi struggling with food insecurity and poverty. May our support for Project Compassion enable them to become more self-sufficient. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
7. We pray for youth workers engaging with young migrants from troubled lands. May they gain their confidence and open up pathways to a new future for them. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
8. We pray for our parish community. May these last weeks of Lent draw us close together and ready to follow Jesus on the way of cross. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.
9. We pray for the recently deceased, especially those who have died from the coronavirus, . . . and for those whose anniversary of death occurs around this time. May they be called forth from the darkness of death into the light of life. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

Priest

God of life and love, you sent your Son to free us from the bonds of sin and death. Help us to claim the freedom he won for us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.



Jesus brings Lazarus back to life

5th Sunday of Lent, Year A

Fill in the missing word on each strip of cloth to find out what the letters in each box spell.

Jesus' good r n Lazarus was very sick.

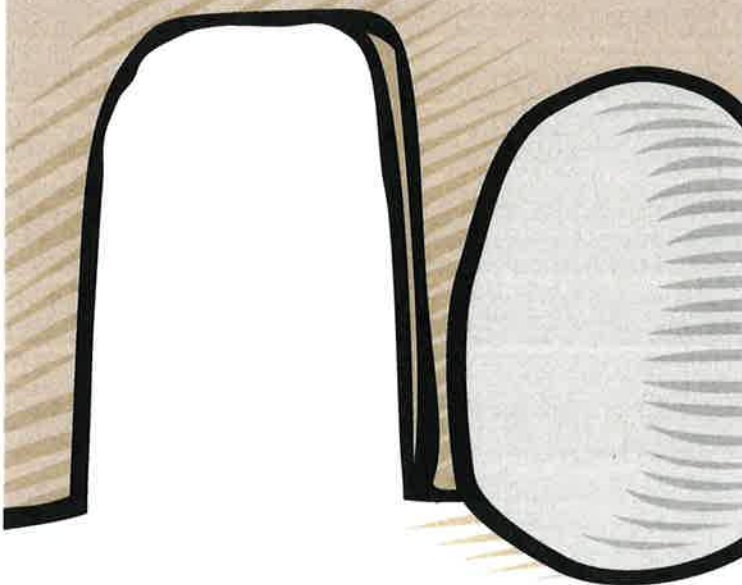
Martha and M were sad when their brother died.

"Lazarus will v again", said Jesus.

Jesus went to the opened b and prayed.

Lazarus walked out of s tomb alive.

Draw Lazarus leaving the tomb wrapped in strips of cloth.



Martha and Mary were sad when Lazarus died. They missed their brother, but still they showed faith in Jesus. What do you think Martha and Mary said to Lazarus when he came out of the tomb?

