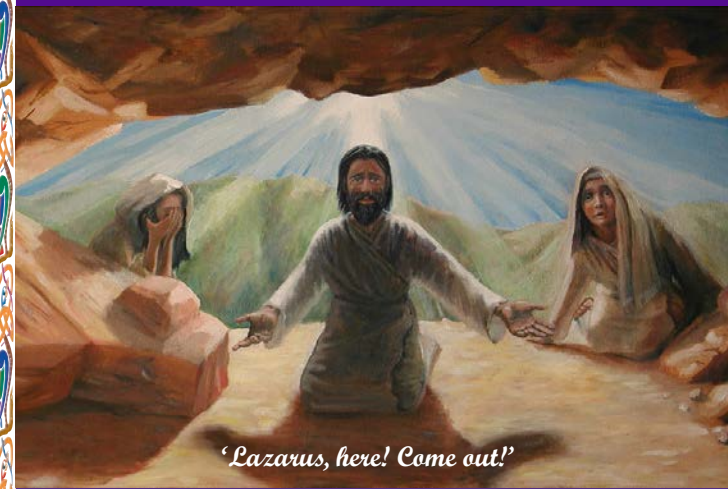


focus on sunday

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT 26th March 2023

The gospel of Jesus is one of hope. In raising someone from death he promises companionship, hope and eternal presence to all his people. This is the message of Christian hope.



'Lazarus, here! Come out!'



The raising of Lazarus is a strange story – it is not about the afterlife but about coming back to the present life and living it fully. The writers knew Jesus as the God of the living. We also get to see Jesus, as a man, grieving for his friend and as the Son of God raising him from the dead.

I think of Lazarus coming back with new light in his eyes. Had he seen a bit of what is to come? Jesus comes to bring life and to the full.

We kill ourselves on the inside often. Grief can overcome us; we can live with anger for years. We need the shared love that comes from being heard, being listened to; and we need the faith that comes from our love of God, often the love of faith. Pope Francis lists three elements of Prayer – Faith, Perseverance and Courage.

The call from Jesus is to live to the full; with love and prayer; and to us to unbind each other from what cripples our spirits. We live life to the full in our care for those in need: the freedom of the migrant arriving here to a world which will not torture them and will give them their dignity; of the young person scared of exams and unemployment and wondering will they ever find real love; for all of us when fear and worry and anxiety gets us down.

In the time of bereavement Martha shared her grief with Jesus. Death will always call on our faith, as it did for the friends of Jesus. We can do that in what keeps us down in life. She looked to him and prayed to him for hope and new life. Prayer like that is also the door to a freer life.

Donal Neary SJ, Editor Sacred Heart Messenger.

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.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSEL ACCLAMATION

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
who ever believes in me will never die.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**

GOSEL John 11:3-7.17.20-27.33-45 (Shorter Form Only)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

The sisters 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, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews 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.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us to one another and to the Father:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division:

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you intercede for us with your Father:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us.... **Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ....

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Ezekiel 37: 12 -14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

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.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps. 129

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 Romans 8: 8 - 11

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests,



APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

All bow for following two lines:

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Pray brothers and sisters,

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Hear us, almighty God, and, having instilled in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice. Through Christ our Lord.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION

The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Everyone who lives and believes in me will not die for ever, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Bless, O Lord, your people, who long for the gift of your mercy, and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire they may receive by your generous gift. Through Christ our Lord.