



## The Fourth Sunday of Lent 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The raising of Lazarus – James Martin

In the name of the + Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

In the name of the Father  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

### **HYMN**

We sing the praise of Him who died,  
Of Him who died upon the Cross;  
The sinner's hope let men deride,  
For this we count the world but loss.

It makes the coward spirit brave,  
And nerves the feeble arm for fight;  
It takes its terror from the grave,  
And gilds the bed of death with light:

Inscribed upon the Cross we see  
In shining letters, God is love!  
He bears our sins upon the tree,  
He brings us mercy from above.

The Cross: it takes our guilt away;  
It holds the fainting spirit up;  
It cheers with hope the gloomy day,  
And sweetens every bitter cup.

The balm of life, the cure of woe,  
The measure and the pledge of love,  
The sinner's refuge here below,  
The angels' theme in heaven above.

### **Introduction to confession**

Let us prepare ourselves to receive God's Word.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.  
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,  
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:  
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:  
fill us with your Spirit.  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:  
fill us with your Spirit.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

The Lord enrich you with his grace,  
and nourish you with his blessing;  
the Lord defend you in trouble and  
keep you from all evil  
the Lord accept your prayers  
and absolve you from your offences, +  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

### Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Most merciful God,  
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Let us pray.

The Collect for Lent

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made  
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:  
create and make in us new and contrite hearts  
that we, worthily lamenting our sins  
and acknowledging our wretchedness,  
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,  
perfect remission and forgiveness;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

### A Reading from The Old Testament Ezekiel 37 1-14

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. 3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

4 Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath] enter you, and you

will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

11 Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

This is the word of the Lord

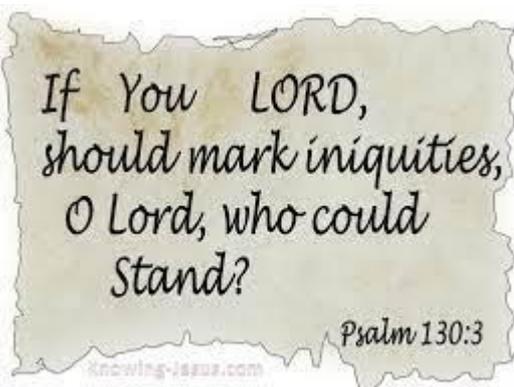
**Thanks be to God**

## Psalm 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

2 Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive  
to my cry for mercy.



3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,  
Lord, who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness,  
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.

6 I wait for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord,  
for with the Lord is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.

8 He himself will redeem Israel  
from all their sins.

## A reading from the New Testament Romans 8. 6-11

<sup>6</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if

Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

HYMN

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto Me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon My breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
The living water; thirsty one,  
Stoop down, and drink, and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
Of that life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's Light;  
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,  
And all thy day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In Him my Star, my Sun;  
And in that light of life I'll walk,  
Till traveling days are done.

**The Gospel  
John 11. 1-45**

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.  
Blessed are those who have endured temptation;  
they have stood the test and will receive the crown of life.  
**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All Glory be to thee O Lord**

**1** Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) **3** So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

**4** When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, **7** and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

**8** "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. <sup>10</sup> It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

<sup>11</sup> After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

<sup>12</sup> His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” <sup>13</sup> Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

<sup>14</sup> So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, <sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

<sup>16</sup> Then Thomas (also known as Didymus<sup>[a]</sup>) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

<sup>17</sup> On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was less than two miles<sup>[b]</sup> from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup> and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

<sup>21</sup> “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

<sup>24</sup> Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

<sup>28</sup> After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” <sup>29</sup> When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

<sup>32</sup> When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. <sup>34</sup> “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

<sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

<sup>37</sup> But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup> “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

<sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

<sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to thee, O Christ**

**Reflection**

The raising of Lazarus was probably the key event that provoked action from Jesus’ enemies, and no doubt alerted Jesus that His ministry was reaching its climax.. This event caused many to believe in him. Jew and non-Jews and the authorities feared.

Non-Jews were seeking Him, recognising the breadth of his teaching and observing his mighty signs. The raising of Lazarus from death had increased his reputation and would later cause the crowd to great him as Messiah, on Palm Sunday. All this provoked a growing determination by the authorities to seek his death; things were getting out of control.

*“Here is this man performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”v.47-48*

Jesus recognises this as his hour. He will fall into the ground as a seed but one which will bear much fruit.

Jesus asks 307 different questions in the Gospels Google tells me. He now asks one of himself. “What then shall I say...Father, save me from this hour?” He provides his own answer, “For this hour I came.” The ‘hour’ that is ahead for Him is beyond our imagining or understanding, but within this action, this passion, is an event that has changed the world.

We will have times in our lives when we must decide on obedience. We can never have full control of the things that happen to us, but we can decide what we will allow to control us. The question we need to ponder is, under what authority have we placed ourselves; the fleeting, ever changing demands of the world or steady sureness of faith in the God of truth and love. Which puts me in mind of a poem I read years ago.

## The Plough

Keep me from turning back –  
My hand is on the plough, my faltering hand.  
But all in front of me is untilled land,  
The wilderness and solitary place,  
The lonely desert with its interspace.  
What harvest have I but this paltry grain,  
These dwindling husks, a handful of dry corn,  
These poor lean stalks? My courage is outworn.  
Keep me from turning back.  
The handles of my plough with tears are wet,  
The shears with rust are spoiled, and yet, and yet,  
Out in the field, ne'er let the reins be slack;  
My God! My God! Keep me from turning back!  
– Author unknown

## The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. **Amen.**

## Intercessions

We pray to the Lord for courage to give up other things  
and to give ourselves to him this Lent.

Give your Church the courage  
to give up her preoccupation with herself  
and to give more time to your mission in the world.  
We pray for ...  
May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus  
bring forgiveness to your people  
and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation.  
Lord, meet us in the silence,  
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give your world the courage  
to give up war, bitterness and hatred,  
and to seek peace.

We pray for ...

May the shoulders of the risen Jesus,  
once scourged by soldiers,  
bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy  
in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

We pray for ...

May the presence of the risen Jesus,  
his body once broken and now made whole,  
bring peace and direction as we live with one another.

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage  
to give up our selfishness as we live for others,  
and to give time, care and comfort to the sick.

We pray for ...

May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch,  
and the light of his presence fill their rooms.

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death  
and to rejoice with those who have died in faith.

Especially we hold ... in our minds.

May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross,  
walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony,  
and walk with us and all your Church  
through death to the gate of glory.

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
give us strength and hear our prayer,  
here and in eternity. Amen.

God our Father,  
in your love and goodness  
you have taught us to come close to you in penitence  
with prayer, fasting and generosity;  
accept our Lenten discipline,  
and when we fall by our weakness,  
raise us up by your unfailing mercy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your  
Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

God, who from the death of sin raised you to new life in Christ,  
keep you from falling and set you in the presence of his glory;  
And the blessing of God almighty, +  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

#### HYMN

1 The royal banners forward go;  
The cross shows forth redemption's flow,  
Where He, by whom our flesh was made,  
Our ransom in His flesh has paid:

2 Where deep for us the spear was dyed,  
Life's torrent rushing from His side,  
To wash us in the precious flood  
Where flowed the water and the blood.

3 Fulfilled is all that David told  
In sure prophetic song of old.  
That God the nations' king should be  
And reign in triumph from the tree.

4 On whose hard arms, so widely flung,  
The weight of this world's ransom hung,  
The price of humankind to pay  
And spoil the spoiler of his prey.

5 O Tree of beauty, tree most fair,  
Ordained those holy limbs to bear:  
Gone is thy shame, each crimsoned bough  
Proclaims the King of Glory now.

6 To Thee, eternal Three in One,  
Let homage meet by all be done;  
As by the cross Thou dost restore,  
So guide and keep us evermore.