

THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 37: 1 2-14

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

Psalm 129

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:8-11

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.

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

GOSPEL

(shorter form)

John 11:1-45

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 Judea".

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. 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 know indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake or 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 race. 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.

St Anthony of Padua

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Priest: Fr. Peter Draper (Tel: 725193)

Deacons: Rev. John Kilshaw (07759 943667)

Rev. Tom Butler (retired - 07853777957);

Sunday Masses: 6.00 (Vigil - Saturday Evening) 9.30am (Sunday Morning)

Weekday Mass: Tue, Wed, Fri: 9.15am. (Mon & Thurs 9.15am at Holy Family)

Confessions: Saturday: 5.30 - 5.50pm

Annexe: 725544

Social Centre: 735963

Primary school: 726621

Playgroup/Preschool 07963 700591

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Unbind and Let Go

"Lazarus is dead," Jesus tells the disciples. It's not hard to imagine the questions that might be running through the minds of the disciples and the hearts of Mary and Martha. They are the same kind of questions we ask ourselves and each other whenever life is interrupted and changed in ways we do not want, when circumstances show us just how difficult, fragile, and beautiful life really is. "Why? How could this happen? What's next for me? Is this an ending or a beginning? Could it be both? How do I make sense of what has happened? Is there life after this? Why didn't God do something?" Every time life sets before us those kind of questions we are reminded that we live with more questions than answers, and the answers we do have no longer seem to carry the weight and authority they once did. Our lives are filled with unanswered questions.

The unanswered questions of life tend to leave us confused and disappointed. Disappointment is always wrapped up in and bound by our unmet expectations. That's where Mary and Martha are in today's gospel. They are disappointed and confused. "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." Our 'if only' longings are ultimately about the past, our dislike of what is or our fear of something new. We want to preserve what was and keep things the way they've always been. Almost always they come from a place of sorrow and loss, regret, failure, or disappointment. The illusion of "if only" wraps around our lives like grave clothes. We use it to try to bind up what has fallen apart, preserve what is decaying, and tie us to what has been lost.

Jesus does not offer answers or explanations to Mary and Martha, or to us. Instead, he uses our confusion as "an agency for transformation" (David Whyte). Confusion asks us to reassess ourselves and our inner world. It is the first step in freeing us from misguided assumptions. It opens our eyes to a deeper way of seeing. "Unbind and let go." Every time we refuse to live an "if only" life, we unbind the past and let it go. We do not reject the past, throw it away, or deny its value and importance to us. Instead, we free it to be made new, to be given new life, to become a new creation. (Michael Marsh. Adapted)

Fifth Sunday in Lent Year A 29th March 2020

DIARY AND MASS INTENTIONS

for the week beginning Saturday 28th March 2020

Sat	Bill Akin	
Sun	For our parish	<i>5th Sunday in Lent</i>
Mon	KM Job, KM George, Molly George	
Tue	Rose Salter	
Wed	Anne Consiglio	
Thur	Evelyne Mary Bamber	
Fri	Donal O'Toole	
Sat:	Eric Hyland	
Sun	For our parish	<i>PALM SUNDAY</i>

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Thank you to those who put their offertory envelopes through the Presbytery door last weekend. It is much appreciated. However, I suggest that you don't do this in future because we're advised to only go out when necessary. Just hold on to them.

A few people have asked about the **new offertory envelopes**. These were due to be distributed from this week but they will have to remain in the Presbytery for now. We could send them out by post but many people will be suffering financially at this time and I would not want to add any pressure on them. I was going to put the parish bank details for those who want to make out a standing order to the parish but have been advised not to put this information on the internet to avoid being hacked. So this information will only go out to those who have requested a copy of the Newsletter be sent to them. Thank you

Masses received this week:

Donal O'Toole.

Please pray for. Joan Anderton, Bill Embery, Lawrence Dunnagan, John Myerscough and Alice Myerscough, Mary Kathleen Kellett, Chris Goldsmith, Frank & Norah Stanton, Teresa Clarkson, Theresa Crook, Betty Murphy, Marie Gardner, Karen Hardman, Carole Adnitt, Frances & Les Farrer, Ann Consiglio;

... for those who have died recently: Mary Theresa Wilson, Bill Akin;

... and for those whose anniversaries are around now: Mary Bamber, Joe Rogers, Frances Dewhurst, Harry Daggars, Frank Clarkson, Margaret Langtree, Rose Salter, Anne & Bert Keane, Dorothy Pickles, Wladyslaw Stopyra, Thomas Hooper, Albert Butler, Michael Atkinson, Melvyn Evans, Doreen Murray, Dorthy Heskin, Margaret Holden, David McBride, Elizabeth Proctor.

Church is closed—but our parish lives!

The situation changes week by week, sometimes day by day. This week we had the news that all churches had to be closed. Parishioners had been finding our church a haven for private prayer so this has been a great sadness.

- **Prayer** is very important at this time. It is in prayer and in the presence of Christ in our community as the body of Christ that binds us together whether we can physically get together or not. We are never alone when Christ is present with us

Fr. Peter continues to offer **Mass** on behalf of the parish every morning but this has to be in private. If you wish Mass to be offered for any intention simply ask, either by phone or by e-mail.

- There are **Newsletters** every weekend as usual. Copies will be on St. Anthony's school website. If you would like one by e-mail send your e-mail address to parish.priest2@btinternet.com (don't forget the dot or the 2) It is important that we keep contact with each other.

- You can still email us with things for the Newsletter, including helpful ideas about the current situation and what we can do.

- we have a group of **26 volunteers** (not all are parishioners) - some are self isolating but are able to chat to those stuck indoors. We've delivered contact cards to over 2000 addresses in about 68 streets in the parish. We've only had 12 requests so far (early days): shopping, prescriptions, posting letters, delivering newspapers, and a couple for chats. A number of people have been in touch or popped out of their houses just to say Thank You. Thanks to Peter Newsham for acting as co-ordinator on 724576.

- The current guidance is that **funerals** may now only take place at the crematorium or the graveside. Attendance is limited to immediately family on government advice. The priest present must follow the guidelines regarding social distancing. At a later date it will be possible to celebrate Mass in church for those who have died.

You can follow **Mass streamed** via the internet

9.45am St. Kentigern's Blackpool Facebook Group: Parish of Christ the King & St. Kentigern

10.00am Holy Family Freckleton: Facebook Group: St Anne Westby & Holy Family Catholic Churches

10.00am, St. Joseph's Lancaster: Facebook Group: St Joseph's Church

10.00am St. Clare's Preston YouTube Channel: StClaresChurch

10.30am St. Mary's Cleator Facebook Group: St Mary & St Joseph's Catholic parish

11.00am St. Mary's Barrow. <https://ourladyoffurness.org.uk/2020/03/29>.

If you have difficulty accessing any of the above check the website for that parish.

- We will continue to print the **Sunday scripture readings** on the Newsletter so you can use them at home.

- **The Catholic Voice.** There are copies of our free diocesan newspaper in church. Or you can read it online at <https://www.churchpaper.co.uk/>

- **Children's liturgy resources** can be found on <http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy>
<http://catholicchildrensliturgy.blogspot.com/> <https://sermons4kids.com/>
<https://www.catholicquiz.com/cqw/reflection.php>

Next Sunday is Palm Sunday

And then Holy Week which will be like never before. More details next Sunday.