



UNITED IN PRAYER

A RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES, HOUSEHOLDS, & INDIVIDUALS

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

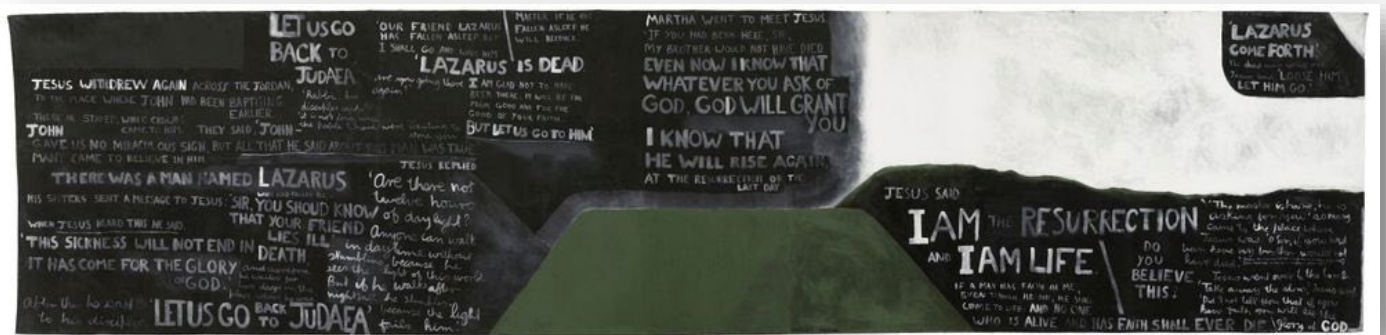
(YEAR A)

29 March 2020



GATHER

BE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT, RECONISING GOD IN OUR MIDST



Practical religion: the resurrection of Lazarus showing Mount Martha, 1969 by Colin McCahon

SET UP A PRAYER SPACE/FOCUS

Gather what you can from around your house to create a prayer space or focus for the time of prayer. You might like to include a candle, cross, Bible and some purple or violet cloth if you have something in your home.

TAKE A MOMENT TO CENTRE YOURSELF

Take a moment to centre yourself, allow whatever is in your heart to rise.
Offer your thoughts to the loving care of our God.
Now make the Sign of the Cross as you begin this time of prayer.

SING OR LISTEN TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING HYMNS

Christ in Me Arise – Trevor Thomson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aO6TAHD2Rxs>

Shepherd me O God – Marty Haugen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0kxWXHETIU>



PROCLAIM

TIME TO READ THE SCRIPTURES

Here you will find references for this weekend's readings. While we cannot physically gather for Mass, the Word of God is what can nourish us. You are welcome to pray the Scriptures how you wish. The text of the Gospel is included; however you may wish to pray with the longer version, particularly as we currently have the time!

THIS WEEKS READINGS

Open a Bible or visit universalis.com to find the readings.

FIRST READING: EZEKIEL 37:12-14

I Shall put my Spirit in you, and you will live.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 129 (130)

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

You can pray the Psalm by listening along to it sung [here](#).

SECOND READING: ROMANS 8:8-11

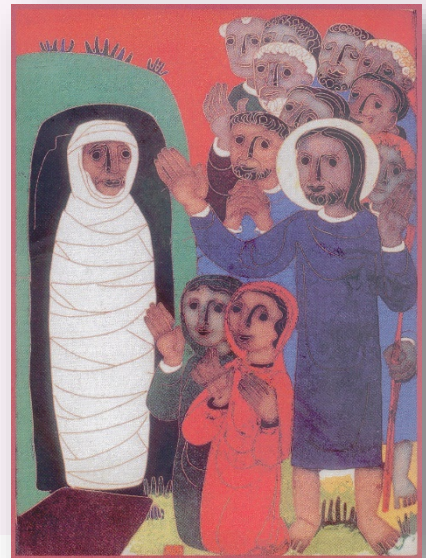
The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you.

GOSPEL: JOHN 11:3-7,17,20-27,33-45

I am the resurrection and the life.

Mary and Martha 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.'



Lazarus by Egino G Weinert

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.

GOSPEL: JOHN 11:1-45 (Full Text)



BREAK

REFLECT ON THE SCRIPTURES

This section of the prayer resource is designed to be adapted for people depending on how they are gathering to pray. There are options for praying as families or in households and for those praying as individuals.

FOR FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLDS

FOR CHILDREN

What do you remember about today's reading? Today we hear about an amazing thing that Jesus does for his friend Lazarus.

Jesus hears that his friend Lazarus is sick. Sadly, by the time Jesus gets there Lazarus is dead and has been buried for four days. Jesus goes to the tomb and asks them to roll away the stone which was blocking the entrance. He tells Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Lazarus walks out, covered in the cloths that he was buried in.

How do you think Mary, Martha and the other people there feel when they see Lazarus walking out of the tomb?

Why do you think Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead?

(Parent tip: So that the people believe that Jesus is the Son of God. To show that he brings life to those who believe in him.)

Unfortunately, sometimes, just like Lazarus in today's gospel, people do get sick. When this happens in New Zealand, they can go to the hospital where doctors and nurses work hard to care for them and try to make them better.

We are hearing a lot about people being sick because of the coronavirus in the news at the moment. This can worry us. Lots of things have had to change, and that can make us feel sad, especially if we miss our friends and family who we can't meet up with right now.

Jesus knows how we feel. He felt very sad and cried for his friend Lazarus who he loved.

We are all doing what we can to keep ourselves and other people well. We are very grateful for all the doctors, nurses and everyone who are working so hard to care for those who are in need.

God gives life to us all. God created us and wants every single one of us to live a happy life, with all the things that we need to grow and be the best people we can be.

Even while we are staying at home, **what can we do this week to help make a small difference to the lives of other people? Talk about how you can make a difference this week.**

If you have younger children and a printer, you may like to print off copies of Page 7 for your kids to do.

Adapted from CAFOD UK's Children's Liturgy Reflection

FOR TEENAGERS

In the Gospel today Jesus doesn't show up when Mary and Martha thought he should have ...

Do you have friends like that?

How does it make you feel when you think something is ruined because they were late?

Mary and Martha basically said to Jesus "It really sucks you weren't here to save him". The reality of their loss was painful. It was something Mary and Martha would have rather not had to endure. Wouldn't it be easier if Jesus just spared us from all the difficult things in life?

Have you ever been in a situation that has left you thinking or maybe even asking: "God, why didn't you show up?"

In our daily, organised, routine lives, we are used to things happening in an orderly way. We are used to things happening when we want and in the way we want them. Even attending Mass can be like that – it is (usually) organised, routine, orderly. We are used to God "showing up" in certain ways.

For now, we can't gather in our normal, organised, routine, orderly way. Maybe the questions we should spend the rest of the time reflecting on is:

How did God show up in my life today?

How will I invite Jesus to show up and bring me life tomorrow?



BREAK

FOR FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLDS

FOR EVERYONE

Multiple times in this Gospel reading we are reminded of how much Jesus loves his friends. He is disturbed by their mourning and cries for Lazarus. Jesus shares with us our deepest emotions, our friendship, and grief. He literally feels our pain. Jesus wept when he saw the others weeping. He felt the impact that this tragic event had on Mary, Martha and the others, and shared in that sorrow.

Mary, Martha and the others were not only mourning the loss of Lazarus, but they may have had their faith shaken as well. Martha tells Jesus that she knows Lazarus would not have died if he had been there sooner. Some of the others who were there had similar remarks. It was hard for them to understand why Jesus would have let such a thing happen. But Jesus trusts that death is not the end for Lazarus; it is a transition into a new life which God will provide.

Belief is an important theme in this Gospel. In Aramaic, the language of Jesus, the word for “believe” can also be translated as “rely on” or “lean on.” We are asked to not only intellectually believe, but also believe in a very practical way. Jesus asks Martha if she believes in him, and she responds that she does. However, when Jesus asks Martha to roll away the stone in front of Lazarus’ tomb, putting her faith in him into action, she hesitates. It can be hard for us to act in faith, even if we are strong in our beliefs. Jesus challenges us to believe in him openly and actively so that others can believe – to trust him enough to roll away the stone.

We are facing one of the most difficult times in recent history. We are unable to physically be with our network of friends and family and we may find that our faith has been shaken. **In what ways can this Scripture speak to us in our unique circumstance today?**

Jesus was troubled by the grief of his friends and he wept for the death of Lazarus. **How do we feel seeing him experience these emotions?**

Amid uncertainty and social isolation, how can we put our faith into action in our own lives?

When we act in faith, how might it help others to come to believe in God?

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with those in your family/household.

Adapted from Caritas Lenten Reflection 2020. Find the full reflections for this season [here](#).

FOR INDIVIDUALS

What stands out to you most in the Scriptures you have read? Sit with that word, phrase, idea or feeling for a moment. Invite the Spirit to reveal to you why this is of significance for you today.

The Word of God is going to be really important for us as we navigate this time of being socially isolated. We are unable to physically attend Mass, we cannot receive the Eucharist, we can’t gather in community, but this doesn’t mean that Jesus isn’t present to us. We will become aware of his presence in new ways.

In the Gospel, Jesus delays showing up. He doesn’t arrive when they expect him to. We too are probably used to Jesus showing up in our lives in particular ways, but for now, let us keep paying attention to the new ways that he does so. As Cardinal John Dew wrote in his pastoral letter this week,

“During this time please do all you can to “remain in his love” and to be aware of his Spirit within you. We are not just remaining at home, we are remaining/staying with Jesus. Doing that will enable all of us to look forward in hope with the expectation of meeting up again with our families and friends, our work colleagues and associates.”

In the first reading we hear the Jesus say, “I have promised, and I will do it.” God makes us a hope-filled promise.

Today we also read the shortest verse in Scripture, “Jesus wept.” Jesus is with us in our suffering. Here, with us.

Usually these readings bring us a strong sense of hope as we move towards the end of Lent. This year it may feel different. As we approach Palm Sunday next weekend, many of us may feel that we are very much still in the tomb. That is okay, for now.

The tomb leads to the resurrection. Lazarus is brought back to life. These events foreshadow Jesus’ Resurrection. We can find much hope here. God will fulfil his promises.

Where am I able to find hope in the events of today’s Gospel?

Where can I recognise small signs of ‘new life’ in my day?

How can I remain conscious of these in the week ahead?



SEND

SENT TO LIVE WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED

CLOSING PRAYER

E te Ariki, you are the resurrection and the life. We believe in you. We cling to you. We rely on you. Through our actions, we reaffirm our faith. May our actions in the communities around the world bear fruit.

Āmene.

From the Caritas Aotearoa Lent Reflection 2020

SING OR LISTEN TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING HYMNS

Christ Be our Light – Bernadette Farrell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJq3bhdgQoc>

Remain in Me, I Am the Vine – Steve Angrisano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQQgb7x9KHg>

WAYS TO LIVE THIS PRAYER THROUGH THE WEEK

- ✓ Even while we are staying at home, **what can we all do this week to help make a small difference to the lives of other people?**
- ✓ Maybe we can make sure we call some of our friends. Or write a nice message on a sign to put in our window so people walking by can read it. We might need to be especially kind to those we are living with this week too.



UNITED

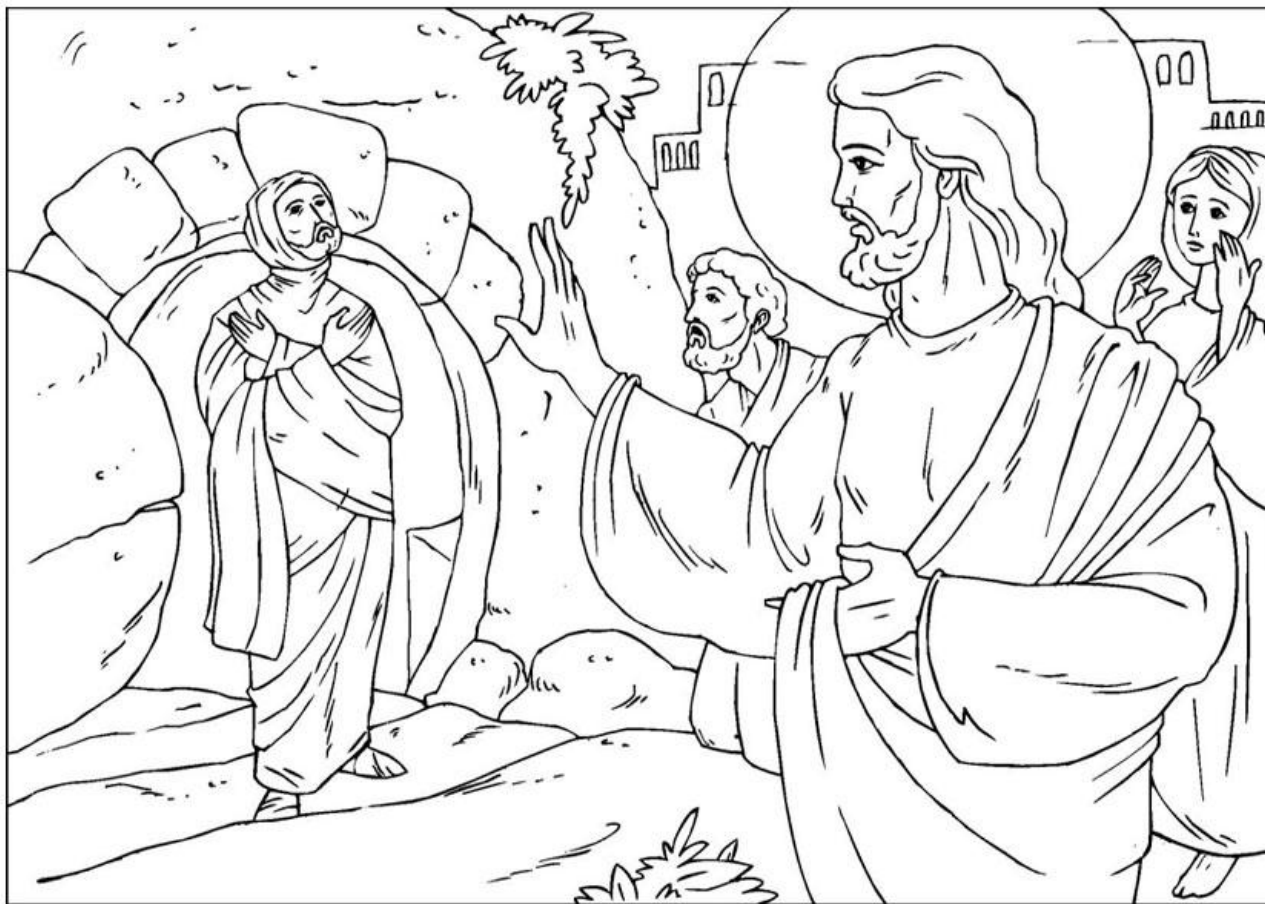
This resource has been developed during the Covid-19 pandemic to assist families, households and individuals to pray together. Our church buildings may be closed, but the Church is still open. As we near the end of our Lenten journey, the domestic Church becomes our primary way of being able to recognise Christ in our midst.

To stay up to date with resources and information make sure you sign up to our weekly e-newsletter at <http://pndiocese.org.nz/newsletter> and visit <https://pndiocese.org.nz/covid19-united/>

CHILDREN'S HANDOUT

Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Gospel: John 11:1-45



Across

1. What did Jesus give to Lazarus? New.....
3. The name of Lazarus' other sister
4. Who raised Lazarus from the dead?

Down

1. The name of Jesus' friend who died
2. The name of one of Lazarus' sisters

