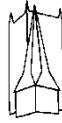


Good News Sheet



ST PETER, SLINFOLD and ST NICOLAS, ITCHINGFIELD

SUNDAY 29th MARCH THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

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. Amen.**

Bible readings for The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Romans 8:6-11

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

John 11:1-45

A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus

answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Reflection

Death – it haunts us, especially at this difficult time of Covid-19: when we read the news or watch the TV; when we think about aging or sick loved ones; we hit a point in life where thoughts of our mortality can keep us awake at night.

Our readings this Sunday are about death, but they're also about life; about a God who seems as frustrated and angry at death as we do, who is able to summon new life from that which was dead.

Here, as we enter Passiontide and draw closer to the walk toward the cross of Good Friday, we are reminded that 'neither death, nor life...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

In our reading from Romans, Paul distinguishes between two contrasting kinds of life: the life of the flesh and the life of the spirit. The life of the flesh is dominated by the self and it's on its way to death.

The life of the spirit is a life of grace; those who live this life have God as their centre and are spiritually alive. They die like the first, but die to rise again. They have a future and are on a path of true life. They believe firmly in our creed's phrase about 'the Lord, the giver of life.'

To be 'in Christ' is to be led by his Spirit and to belong to him. To walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit is to live in the light of Christ's victory over sin and death. Those who are 'in the Spirit' have the Spirit of God, of Christ, dwelling within them, inhabiting them.

To 'set the mind' is to focus attention deliberately and consistently on a way of being and acting. It is to think and act in the assurance that sin and death do not have the last word. The peace to be known is not just peace and quiet, peace of mind, or peace as an absence of conflict. But rather it is to know 'peace that passes understanding', peace with God.

The raising of Lazarus is the last of Jesus' "signs" in the Gospel of John.

Martha greets her friend, berates him for his absence but also expresses confidence in his presence. She then goes on to confess him as the Messiah, the Son of God before he restores Lazarus to life.

Jesus identifies himself: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

Jesus was deeply moved when Mary wept and he wept also. Paul says: "rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Jesus identifies himself with humanity, he truly is one with us.

We have here an instance of the tenderness of Jesus, to the same tender and compassionate Saviour we may now come and he will not cast us away.

Lazarus is unbound, set free. Life comes from death – life in Christ.

Paradoxically, Lazarus's restoration to life would lead to Jesus' death.

There had been a build up of opposition to Jesus among the Jewish leaders, and the Lazarus incident made them more determined to kill him because the signs he was performing were dangerously persuasive. Even the Son of God is not to be spared the common lot of the human nature that he has taken upon himself. And, ironically, the death of Jesus gives true life to the world. He who can raise the dead will himself be raised, and death shall no longer be the final conqueror.

As we approach the end of Lent we are reminded that the body is mortal. But the power of life is always greater than the power of death. Jesus has absolute authority over all things and with him, the impossible becomes possible.

Amen.

Intercessions by Julia Robinson

Dear loving Lord, we thank you for this new day, the start of British Summertime, fresh with new beginnings and expectations when the glory of your creation starts to roll itself out more fully to reveal itself in all its magnificence and for the blessings that you continue to lavish on us. We thank you that we are 'the apples of your eye' and are 'safe in the shadow of your wings' no matter what we may be facing. In these uncertain times we especially thank you for the beautiful place where we live, surrounded by your wonder, where the rhythm of nature continues to give us daily encouragement and hope.

Just as Paul teaches us how to walk in the spirit, Father God open our hearts and help us to discern your will and consciously humble ourselves before you. Dwell in us and in our government, all world leaders, doctors, surgeons, nurses, carers, teachers, scientists working on a vaccine, our bishops and our church worldwide and guide us all how to best face the challenges posed by the coronavirus.

We pray for all of those who are anxious, replace their fear with love, joy and hope and grant them your peace which passes all understanding. We ask for your provision for all those who are struggling but especially the poorer nations facing this illness where there is a huge need for medicines, hospital beds and food. We pray for those in prison and those living in war torn countries. May they be reminded that you are a God who heals and loves, who carries your children through the hardest moments.

We pray for all those known to us personally who are sick and those awaiting surgery that's had to be cancelled – Lord, just as you raised Lazarus from the dead, we pray for working miracles beyond our imagining for them and for ALL who are ill and suffering. Calm their hearts and minds and allow them to rest in your faithful love, knowing you will never let them go.

We thank you Lord that in times of darkness we can always find your light shining amongst us. Thank you for the opportunities of families spending quality time together once more, for communities going those extra miles to connect or re-connect in helping each other, for giving us the chance to be angels to others, for those risking their own lives to care for the sick and for the 'pause' on life that enables both us to reflect and for nature to start healing herself.

We thank you for a coming together across all nations. For the Christian communities around the world who responded to Pope Francis' call to join in at noon on Wednesday in

reciting the Lord's prayer for an end to the current pandemic, we thank you for all those who stood to applaud all the NHS staff at 8pm on Thursday evening and we thank you for Archbishop Justin Welby's initiative last weekend, calling upon us to light a candle every Sunday evening at 7pm in a show of solidarity.

Finally, we thank you Lord for this time of realising and re-assessing what's important in life. I'd like to conclude with a short Celtic Grace for those already currently experiencing cabin/family fever:-
'Spare Us the Fall
May the roof above
never fall in,
May we below
never fall out.'

Merciful Father, accept our prayers in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Saviour, Amen.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**All who have recently been bereaved, and especially:
the families and friends of Janet Chisholm and Paul Collins.**

Those who are sick, and all who care for them, remembering:

Pamela Campbell	Peggy Johnson	Felicite Wilkinson	Bob Rae
Matt	Ian McBean	Jacqueline Dacey	Heather
Alex	Anna Holmes	Jane Busby	Becky
Linda Howard	Doreen Hewitt	Barbara	Sarah
Molly Bonsor	Louis Venni	Christine Lister	Martin
Diana Metson	Frances Aldridge	David Glaister	Michael Barling
David Bourn	Ashlyn	Ann Godfrey	Geoff Fuller
Madge	Chris Godfrey	Hazel	Jagan Asthana
Jenny	Sally	Helen	Eric

Notices

I'm afraid that our church buildings are now locked, but we, the people are the church and can continue to pray, worship and spread the good news in word and deed.

So do please ring someone who might be isolated and contributions can still be made to the **Foodbank**, please drop them at The Rectory and they will be picked up from there.

A poster for people to put in their window as an indication of their prayer as a gift for their neighbours is available from Revd. Sandra.

At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.

Church Electoral Roll

The annual revision of the Church Electoral Roll is due at St Nicolas between the 29th March and 9th April and at St Peter's between 5th and 18th April. If you are not already on the Roll, and wish to be included, please fill in one of the Application for Enrolment forms at the back of the Church and give it to either Revd. Sandra, a Churchwarden or Hilary Sherwin-Smith at Slinfold or Chris Hennock at Itchingfield.

Easter Egg Hunts - for the Cubs and Beavers have now been cancelled. If you kindly donated Easter Eggs for these events and would like them returned, please contact Gill Collier-Morgan 791241.

While we are unable to worship in church there are other alternatives for prayer: the following link will direct you to services of Morning Prayer, Prayer During the Day, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer in which you will be joining with people all over the world.
<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

DAILY SERVICE AND SUNDAY WORSHIP BROADCAST ON RADIO 4 Every weekday morning at 09.45 the BBC broadcasts the Daily Service on R4 Long Wave; it lasts 15 minutes, and **if you have a DAB radio you will need to retune** (normally one click) at 09.45 to our LW station which 'pops up' on your set for the duration of the service. On Sunday mornings at 08.10 there is a 40 minute Sunday Worship. If you have online access, both the Daily Service and Sunday Worship recordings are available via the BBC Sounds app.

A number of national online resources (<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>) including weekly streamed services and daily audio, as well as additional worship provision on the BBC are there to help us.

Horsham District Council would really appreciate your help. If anyone would like to volunteer during this time, knows of a vulnerable person or is vulnerable themselves, they can get in touch with us via this link.

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/community/coronavirus-community-support>

As not everyone is online, we have also printed some template volunteer help cards, which can be used to let people know where their nearest support services are. These will need to be posted through letterboxes, so we will be looking for volunteers to do this so people have a way of contacting help if necessary.

A way into prayer

Cut out a teardrop shape from thin paper or tissue paper. Think of people and places that weep with sadness and need fresh hope and God's resurrection power. Be still and quiet for a few moments, holding your teardrop before God.

Then pray:

Thank you, Lord,

that you weep with the world as you wept with Mary and Martha.

Comfort your people as we comfort others.

Bring restored hope to those I hold up before you today.

May they know your resurrection power.

Amen.

Home comforts

Look around at home and identify things that bring you comfort, e.g. a greetings card, running shoes, a photo. In what other ways might you offer comfort to someone when everything seems to be going wrong for them? What Bible verses, hymns or songs give you comfort? Sometimes just being a calm and non-judgmental presence can bring a sense of peace and acceptance to another person – words may not be needed at all! How could you

be alongside someone else to offer comfort at the moment? We remember today that Jesus is our ever-present comfort when we are troubled or feel all alone.

© ROOTS for Churches Ltd (www.rootsontheweb.com) 2002-2020.
Reproduced with permission.

Churches together in England are offering prayers for this ongoing situation, along with Christians all over our nation and our world at this time. A range of prayer resources are being collated within this article:

[https://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=568755&utm_source=CTBI+Newsletter+S
ubscribers&utm_campaign=204985aeae-
CTBI+Monthly+Newsletter+March2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e94acb8d57-
204985aeae-508071405&ct=t\(CTBI+Monthly+Newsletter-March2020\)](https://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=568755&utm_source=CTBI+Newsletter+S ubscribers&utm_campaign=204985aeae-CTBI+Monthly+Newsletter+March2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e94acb8d57-204985aeae-508071405&ct=t(CTBI+Monthly+Newsletter-March2020))

I end with some words from one of today's hymn's:

There is plentiful redemption in the blood that has been shed,
there is joy for all the members in the sorrows of the Head.
For the love of God is broader than the scope of human mind,
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

Please do contact Revd. Sandra if you need to talk or require assistance.

Tel: 01403 790197 or email sandra.richard@tiscali.co.uk Sandra's day off is Friday

Revd. Rosemary can be contacted on 01403-264396

or email r.a.cattell@btinternet.com Rosemary's day off is Monday

This document is also available on the websites, if you know anyone who might want a copy, please print one off and drop it through their door, or let Revd. Sandra know.

With love in Christ and many prayers,

Revd. Sandra
