

March 26th 2023 5th Sunday of Lent Year A – John 11:1 – 45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴But 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.' ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹Jesus 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. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹²The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' ¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.' ²⁸When 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.' ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The 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. ³²When 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.' ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' ³⁷But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?' ³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus 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.' ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I 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.' ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴The 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.' ⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

<p>➤ Read and re-read – out loud and slowly the Gospel.</p> <p>➤ Meditate - on reading as being spoken to you, an experience in your life</p>	<p>➤ Pray - Thanksgiving – Repentance – Petition</p> <p>➤ Action – Attitude (Call to change / to act /to do)</p>
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In this week's Gospel we see Jesus in the village of Bethany where Lazarus, brother of Martha and Mary lived and he was very ill. Jesus loved the sisters and their brother. He leads Martha and Mary to a new insight into the power of faith over death by his power of teaching and by commanding Martha to take away the stone. He tells them he was glad that he was not there when Lazarus died because now by seeing they will believe. He brings Lazarus out of the tomb – “unbind him and let him go free”. Faced with bondage Jesus is armed with love, trust in the Father and deep compassion. Jesus returns to his place of death in perfect freedom, because of his own belief which is the inner light that keeps him going.

When are the times we were like Lazarus in the tomb, rejected, discouraged, in despair, feeling that life was not worth living? Sometimes we were overwhelmed by guilt and we just wanted to hide ourselves away from the world. Who was the special person that moved away the stone and released us from our heavy burden?

When are the times we have experienced this in our lives? Are there times in our lives when we become intolerant to those who do not see as we see?

Prayer:

Thank you Lord for coming into our lives so that we who were without sight had our eyes opened and realised that we need to change how we relate to you and others in a way that is more compassionate and life giving

Forgive us Lord for letting ourselves become like the Pharisees in that we hide from the evidence before us and take refuge in pious words. We can often at times get angry with those who challenge us because we feel that we are the only ones who have all the answers.

Lord help us and be close to us so that we may bring your judgement to the world and lead the humble to the light showing those who think they see, that they have become blind.