



March 29th 2020

5th Sunday of Lent, Passion Sunday

Collect:

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.

First Reading: Ezekiel 37.1-14

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' ⁴Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

Psalm 130

¹Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;

Lord, hear my voice;
 let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
²If you, Lord, were to mark what is done amiss,
 O Lord, who could stand?
³But there is forgiveness with you,
 so that you shall be feared.
⁴I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
 in his word is my hope.
⁵My soul waits for the Lord,
 more than the night watch for the morning,
 more than the night watch for the morning.
⁶O Israel, wait for the Lord,
 for with the Lord there is mercy;
⁷With him is plenteous redemption
 and he shall redeem Israel from all their sin

A Psalm for people like us

Psalm 23 has been a source of strength for thousands of years. Let's pause and say it every day at I I am through this crisis we now face.

When we are isolated and alone, we remember God is with us; we place our hands in his hands...
 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

When we are tired and confused...
 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

When we are worn out with worry...
 He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

When we are sick and afraid and if we lose those we love...
 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff - they comfort me.

When we face difficulties today and we hope for a better tomorrow...
 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

In the face of trouble & difficulty of all kinds, we remember Jesus' promise of life beyond death...
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Finish reading Psalm 23 with the Lord's Prayer.
Bible verses used here are NRSV, the commentary is by the Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft

Second reading: Romans 8.6-11

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
⁷For 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, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But 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. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If 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.

Gospel reading: John 11.1-45

¹A 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 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 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.

Reflection

I had an interesting conversation with someone (on the phone) about how everyone is keeping cheerful and stiff upper lip, but actually we don't all feel like that! What about lament? Can't we lament? Why not? Because we have lost our freedom and way of life, things we take for granted like going into town, seeing the family etc have gone. Perhaps we are finding ourselves saying 'what ifs' or 'if only'. In the OT reading for today we have the familiar story of the 'dry bones', Ezekiel was a priest and prophet and had a strong sense of being called and he offers encouragement to God's people in exile in Babylon. This passage is the set reading in modern synagogues for the Sabbath during Passover, to continue the memory of the Jewish history. The bones represent the house of Israel and the message here is that God has the power to restore life, life to what was apparently dead, the embers of hope were dead, they were busy lamenting from the outside and not living on the inside. The Lord's Spirit/breath/wind will bring life back to these dry bones, you will live – here we can reflect on God raising Jesus from the dead, Verse 12, when all seemed lost.

Psalm 130 is about forgiveness and a fresh start.

In Romans we read about how flesh is death(outside) and our mind and soul/ life and peace (inside), Christ is in you!

Then we come to story usually called the Raising of Lazarus. Bethany was one of the places we visited on pilgrimage in January, hopefully Stuart has attached the photos of the mosaics for you.

Here we have a classic John, something happens, Jesus performs something, there is a discussion and lives are transformed through belief.

Here is an 'if only' moment for Martha, if only Jesus had got here sooner? Perhaps we have lots of those 'if only' moments, if only we'd seen the signs sooner, if only I'd revised more, if only he'd not got in with the wrong crowd. Nostalgia for a life that could have been, and to keep lamenting on these things means living a life in the past. Martha was lamenting on what life might have been. If Jesus.... Dare we think what things would be like for us if Jesus...?

All the readings today can be summed up in one word, RESURRECTION. The hope of the resurrection is not a long way off, out of our reach in some distant promise, but here now, for everyone of us who believe in Jesus as the Son of God. The key here is the faith of a woman lamenting the loss of her brother. It is her faith, that Jesus is the promised one, that led to Jesus doing something way beyond her expectations. It doesn't mean that there will be no death or suffering for us who believe, as Lazarus does eventually die. Personally, I don't think poor Lazarus was ever quite the same as before! For us today hope in the risen Jesus gives hope even in the most desperate of situations, amazing things happen when we least expect it.. Even if we can't see them

at the moment, life won't always be like this, staying in our homes, not being able to visit the grandchildren and give them a hug on their birthday, or meeting a friend for a coffee and chat in Daniels. We lament these things, it's ok to run to Jesus like Martha and tell him these things, tell him your fears and disappointments. Jesus promises to meet us in our problems, our grief and all the mess that surrounds us. If we dare to believe and have faith (live on the inside), then we can be a witness and encouragement to others (on the outside), especially now more than ever – so that they too can dare to believe that Jesus is indeed the resurrection and the life. Amen.

Intercessions

Let us pray, for the Church and for the world, and let us thank God for his goodness.

Breathe new life into the Church ... Break through our sloth and indifference, giving power to proclaim Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life. And we pray for the Church, and all Bishops and Priests, throughout the world. We pray especially for our Archbishops Justin and John. And in our area, we pray for Bishop Stephen, Bishop Colin, Bishop Olivia, Revd Rosie, and Canon Brian. We pray for all decision makers in the Church. We pray for the Season of Prayer and Repentance. And in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for the churches in Mbamili & Idah (Nigeria), Wau, Wernyol & Ibba (South Sudan), Mbeere (Kenya), Wellington (NZ), Mbhashe (South Africa), Meath & Kildare (Ireland), Ankole, Lango & Buganda (Uganda), Medak (India), Melbourne (Australia) and the Episcopal Church in Missouri (USA).

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Bless the wilderness places of the world, where springs of hope have become dry ... Heal with your life-giving spirit all who are weighed down by the burden of materialism. We pray for all those who work for peace, negotiators and world leaders. We pray for the all the countries of the world in a state of war; we pray especially today for Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Nigeria, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lead us, our families and friends, in the way of true righteousness ... Give us lives more joyful in the assurance of sins forgiven. And in our local community, we pray for everyone in Clewer, Dedworth, and in Windsor. And we pray for Clewer Green School, the head teacher Martin Tinsley and all the pupils, staff and governors. And in our Parish Cycle of Prayer, we pray for those who live or work in: all retail premises in our Parish and those who live or work or are involved with Legoland, Dedworth Medical Centre, Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Guides, Thames Hospice, the Guards Club and Windsor Lawn Tennis Club.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Comfort those who mourn, so that they may know that death is not the end ... Give the spirit of life to those whose spirits are broken by sorrow. Keep us safe in this developing virus outbreak. Protect all your people throughout the world from disease. We pray for our emergency services, doctors, nurses, and all who work in the health service. And locally, we pray especially today, for Blake, Sam Evans, Reuben, Margaret, David, Don, Karl, Hugh, Sarah, Mark, Elsie, Lesley, Refugees, Prisoners, the Homeless and those who mourn. And

we also pray for all who have asked for our prayers, those whose needs we know, and those known to God alone.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Confident in the promise that those who believe in Jesus Christ will live though they are dead, we give thanks for all who have left their earthly body and entered into the greater life of the Spirit. And with confidence in the love of Christ who died for sinners, we commend the souls recently departed this life, Cyril Albone, and Jack Brear, those who have lost their lives in the current pandemic, and those whose anniversaries fall at this time. Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, our rock and our Saviour God, we thank you that you are still holding us in your everlasting arms. Thanks and praise to our God who stands with us in our worries, extremities, sorrows and joys.

Lord help us not to give in to despair or resignation, but instead to look forward to the future with hope. Our times are in your hands Father even though we change our actual time by putting our clocks on this weekend we know the time is coming when we shall see Jesus.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

We join our prayers with those of our Lady, St Andrew, St Agnes, and all the Saints, as we commend ourselves, one another, and those we have prayed for, to your unfailing love. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Diocese Live Stream

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream>

The next diocesan live-stream will take place at 10am on Sunday, 29 March by three of our bishops working together, each from their own homes (God willing). The service will be broadcast on that page, the Bishop of Oxford Facebook page, the Diocese of Oxford Facebook page, and YouTube.

If you follow along with the service, or watch it later, there is an order of service to download there, which contains this Traditional Anglican form of prayer, used by the armed forces when not able to be at the Eucharist:

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of thy Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to thee my soul and body with the earnest wish that may always be united to thee. And since I can not now receive thee sacramentally, I beseech thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to thee, and embrace thee with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate thee from me. May I live and die in thy love. Amen.

Church Finances- message from Andrew

With the suspension of church services our income is likely to fall and, while some of our costs will be reduced, others will be incurred whether we are “open for business” or not. In

the light of this suspension of services you might like to consider continuing your regular giving by paying directly to our bank account, the details of which are:
HSBC Bank, High Street, Windsor
Sort Code: 40-47-37
Account number: 11373366
Account name: PCC St Andrews Church

Parish Office: Sharon Robinson (administrator)
Out of hours office number: 07490 094261
Email: office@clewerparish.org
Rev'd Rosie Webb: rector@clewerparish.org
Tel: 01753 852334
Parish website: www.standrewsclewer.org
Church warden: Stuart Cockman
Pastoral helpline number: 07946590223

**These photos are of the four mosaics in the church of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, Bethany.
They represent the four evangelical episodes in Bethany.**



The meal at the house of Simon the leper, where Mary anoints Jesus' head with oil.

Jesus meeting Martha and Mary at their home Luke 10: 41





At the tomb of
Lazarus, can you see the
man holding his nose!
John 11. 43 in Latin

Jesus in all his glory. "I am the resurrection and the life"

