



Fifth Sunday in Lent

2 April 2017

Sentence "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord; "whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." *John 11.25-6*

Collect God of compassion,
you call us out of the bindings of death on this,
our resurrection day: make us ready to surrender
the fear in which we hide,
that we may step into the future alive and unashamed,
through Jesus Christ, the life of the world. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel prophesied in the early 6th century BC from exile in Mesopotamia. The Jerusalem temple was believed to be the one unique place on earth where God chose to dwell. To hear that it was in ruins was truly shocking. This reading promises the raising of a beaten people from their defeat and humiliation. God promises to restore all that was lost – and more.

The 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. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I 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.' So 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. I 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. Then 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.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then 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." Therefore 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. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I 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.'

Ezekiel 37.1-14

Reader Hear the word of the Lord
ALL **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 130 APBA page 364

This psalm is a prayer for deliverance from personal trouble. It is a lament. Because God's nature is to be merciful, the psalmist waits eagerly for God's help.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

'Flesh' does not mean the physical human body here. Here Paul means all that is opposed to Christ within us which is seen outwardly in wrongdoing. In Paul's view the Spirit is conferred in baptism; in rebirth into a new freedom from sin's power to cause us to do what is wrong.

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.

Romans 8.6-11

Reader May your word live in us
ALL **and bear much fruit to your glory.**

Gospel Acclamation

ALL **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus!**

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.

ALL **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus!**

Reader The Lord be with you

ALL **And also with you**

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to John

ALL **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ**

The raising of Lazarus is the last great sign in John's gospel before Jesus' resurrection which is to life transformed. Poor Lazarus would have to die a second time – which gives the clue as to the nature of the story! Martha's confession of faith is a key element in this narrative. Her words cause Jesus to make the last of the great 'I am' statements of this gospel.

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.

John 11.1-45

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord
ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Prayer for the Week We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: we pray that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his presence abiding in us he may raise us to joys eternal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings next week: Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday)

Isaiah 50.4-9a Psalm 31.9-18 Phil 2.5-11 Matt. 26.14-27.66

Pray for the Faithful Departed: We remember before God: Joyce Helen Granger, Gertrude Edington, Charles Matthew Cooch Bennett, Graham Slobom, Robert Lemon, Eileen Fulton, Dorothy Clark, Hilda Amos, and Arthur Corless *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

