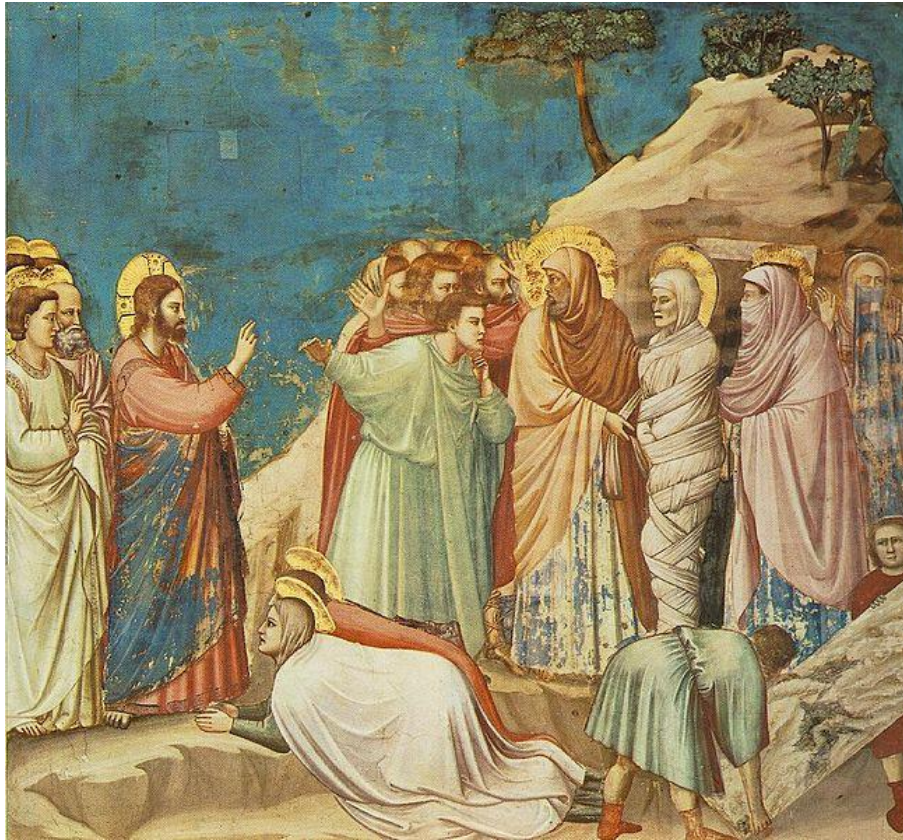


THE PARISH CHURCH
OF
SAINT ANDREW
HEADINGTON



Worship at Home
Fifth Sunday of Lent
29nd March 2020

While public worship is suspended,
we hope to produce a sheet each week
to help you worship at home,
and feel connected to others
who are doing the same.

We also encourage you to join in the worship service
offered by our bishops at 10am on Sunday.
All four Oxford bishops will be working together
to share this service from their own homes.

You can find it here:

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

*The image on the front is The Raising of Lazarus
by Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337).
Painted c.1304 – c.1306 for the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua.*

*On the last page you will see Vincent Van Gogh's depiction of the same subject
painted in May 1890.*

Find a space where you can focus. It might feel strange to say the words out loud if you are on your own but give it a try, or you can say the words in your head.

You might find it helpful to have an icon, a crucifix, a cross, or a lighted candle to help focus your thoughts as you pray.

Preparation

You might want to begin with this prayer:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present
in the Sacrament.
I love you above all things,
and long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
As though you have already come,
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you;
never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.**

St Alphonsus de Liguori

Spend some time thinking about this past week and bring before God anything which needs putting right. Say.

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

**May the God of love
forgive and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by the power of the Spirit,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Pray today's prayer (the 'Collect'):

**Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Word

Read today's Scripture readings:

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

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

A reading from the gospel according to John

Now 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

Spend some time thinking about these readings from Scripture. Here are some reflections that might help to think about them both today and in the coming week:

- This passage explores who Jesus is. The raising of Lazarus is the last of the series of miracles in John's Gospel (the first is the wedding at Cana) which point to Jesus' divinity and the greatest miracle of all: the Resurrection.
- Resurrection comes amid the deep loss that plunges us into darkness, when life hurts and makes no sense. Where in your life do you need resurrection?
- 'If you had been here...' sounds rather like blaming Jesus for Lazarus' death; but both Mary and Martha have faith in him. Have you ever felt angry with God? God is big enough to take your anger. Even if Jesus had been there, would Lazarus really not have died?
- Jesus shows emotion in this passage: he is also fully human, and shares in our human experiences. This can help us find strength and comfort in difficult times: it is not that God chooses who to help or not to help, but rather that even when things feel bleak, God knows, and understands, and is with us.
- Jesus demands that those who witness Lazarus' resurrection are to 'unbind him and let him go'. Jesus gives life to Lazarus, but Lazarus still has to rely on the community around him to uphold him and to unbind him. He cannot do it by himself. How are we being called to uphold, support and unbind one another? What is one thing you can do this week to share God's freeing love?

Prayer

Hold in your mind the things that concern you most, give thanks for those you love and offer these to God. You may want to pray for:

- The places of darkness and loss in our lives and our world and the grace to know the power of God bringing light and life in that darkness
- All who feel anger, sadness or grief, that they might have peace and comfort
- The Church
- Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority
- The parish community
- All hospital staff and medical researchers
- Those who suffer
- The communion of saints

You could close your time in prayer with this prayer:

**God of the present moment,
God who in Jesus stills the storm
and soothes the frantic heart;
bring hope and courage to all
who wait or work in uncertainty.
Bring hope that you will make them the equal
of whatever lies ahead.
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,
for your will is health and wholeness;
you are God, and we need You. Amen.**

Adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book

And then conclude with the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Extinguish your candle, if one is lit, and end this time of worship, but keep the Scripture and prayer for the week, and keep returning to them over the days ahead.

**We are praying for you daily
at St Andrew's.**

For more resources for prayer at home, see our website:
www.standrewsheadington.co.uk

