



THE SAVING WORD

MATTHEW

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT / A

29 MARCH 2020

FIRST READING

Ezek 37:12-14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 129. R. v. 7

R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, / Lord, hear my voice! / O let your ears be attentive / to the voice of my pleading. **R.**
2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, / Lord, who would survive? / But with you is found forgiveness: / for this we revere you. **R.**
3. My soul is waiting for the Lord, / I count on his word. / My soul is longing for the Lord / more than watchman for daybreak. / (Let the watchman count on daybreak / and Israel on the Lord.) **R.**
4. Because with the Lord there is mercy / and fullness of redemption, / Israel indeed he will redeem / from all its iniquity. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 8:8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he will give life to your own mortal bodies.

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you

possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 11:25, 26

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! / I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; / whoever believes in me will not die for ever. / Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

I am the resurrection and the life.

The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.

If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,

and whoever lives and believes in me
will never die.

Do you believe this?

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.
I knew indeed that you always hear me.
But I speak
for the sake of all these who stand round
me,
so that they may believe it was you who
sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Longer form, 11:1-45

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Reflections on the Gospel

ETERNAL LIFE

In today's Gospel, Jesus leaves what is for him safe country across the Jordan to go to Judea. He puts his own life at mortal risk in order to give life to his mortally ill friend.

Strangely, of course, Jesus, on hearing the news of Lazarus' grave illness, delays a few days before acting on the sisters' message. In effect, he allows Lazarus to die. This means that he can enter into and address the grief of Martha and Mary, and of all those who subsequently mourn the death of loved ones.

Martha takes comfort in her conventional belief in the resurrection of the dead on the last day. But Jesus majestically proclaims, 'I *am* the resurrection and the life'. For those who believe, 'eternal life' begins now; it transcends the barrier of death.

Jesus in the end restores Lazarus to this present life. But, beyond a kindness to Lazarus and his sisters, this miracle is more importantly a sign and symbol that, in the sense mentioned above, Jesus is 'the resurrection and the life' for all believe.

What Jesus does for Lazarus in fact plays out in miniature the whole pattern of his life and mission. As incarnate Son of God, he leaves the 'safe country' of his eternal dwelling with the Father (Jn 1:1-2) to enter our world and,



at the cost of his own life, give eternal life to us all. Each one of us, confronted with the prospect of death, is Lazarus, the friend for whom Jesus will give his own life. We should hear the Passion with this in mind.

Brendan Byrne, SJ



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5TH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A - 29 MARCH 2020

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

NO PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS OF MASS, THE CHURCH IS CLOSED 24 HRS

Mass is available daily online at www.catholicvoice.org.au
Sunday Mass is aired on ten (Channel 05) Sunday mornings at 6am

SACRAMENTS

Confession	By request, must be in an open space observing the 1.5 metre physical distancing
Marriage	By appointment, must not exceed 5 persons – couple, witnesses and priest
Funerals	Graveside service only, no more than 10 persons including priest
Anointing	By request
Baptism	Suspended until further notice
Holy Communion	Suspended until further notice
Confirmation	Suspended until further notice

If you have any questions or need to speak to a priest please contact the parish on the phone numbers and/or email indicated above and below

PRAYER REQUESTS

RECENTLY DECEASED. THE SICK AND MASS OFFERINGS

Please email or phone through your prayer and Mass requests, so that we can share them here and gather in spiritual communion to offer your intentions. We pray for the recently deceased especially Mary Bowditch.

PARISH DETAILS

PARISH COUNCIL	PRIESTS / PARISH	PARISH BANKING
Fr George, Fr Namora, Peter Gain, Chris Baron, Anne Saunderson, Craig Ferguson, Kate Howe, Liz Knight	Fr George – 0484 604 273 Fr Namora – 0450 438 444 Madeline Ryan – 0478 000 526	BSB 062 786 A/C 14943 ST PATRICKS PARISH GUNDAGAI

A copy of the Church Bulletin is available on our website each week – www.cg.org.au/gundagai
Please send any notices to gundagai@cg.org.au by midday Wednesday each week for inclusion in the bulletin.

BANKING / PLANNED GIVING

We can, and must, continue supporting the priests and the parish through our first and second collections. These can be done through online banking or by a bank deposit in person. Please note the different accounts and references.

FIRST COLLECTION including Mass Intentions		
BSB 062-786	A/C 000029248	Acc Name: Central Presbytery Fund
IMPORTANT! Please reference your SURNAME and PARISH eg. <i>Smith GUNDAGAI</i>		

SECOND COLLECTION/PLANNED GIVING

BSB 062 786	A/C 000014943	Acc Name: St Patricks Parish Gundagai
Please reference your SURNAME and PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPE NUMBER eg <i>Smith PGENV24</i> Please contact the Secretary 0478 000 526 or gundagai@cg.org.au if you need an envelope number.		

NOTICES

ROSARY & ADORATION

You are encouraged to continue praying the rosary, phone around and arrange to pray 'together' on the same day, at the same time, for the same intentions.

"When the Holy Rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer" ~ St Louis de Montfort

Consider 'virtual Adoration' - through the following website <https://virtualadoration.home.blog/>
"A thousand years of enjoying human glory is not worth even an hour spent in sweetly communing with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." ~ Saint Padre Pio

FR GEORGE'S GOSPEL REFLECTION

The reading from the prophet Ezekiel and the Evangelist John is very timely for our current situation. A time when the entire world is plagued with Coronavirus and many lives lost. It offers us hope and reminds us that God is ever present in our pain and struggles. Even when we think all hope is lost, God steps in. Therefore, we must be steadfast in our faith.

The concept of a grave brings to mind the place of the dead, the place of no return, the place where there is no life. God in the first reading offered to open up the graves and raise His people from their graves; to bring them back to life. This concept of a life-giving God is continued in the Gospel reading where Jesus Christ brought Lazarus who was already dead and decomposing back to life. Jesus wanted Martha and everyone to know that it is through him that Lazarus would rise again.

To believe in Jesus is to have life. Death therefore is not the end of one's life. Jesus who is the resurrection and the life offers this life to us whenever we go to Mass; when we receive the sacraments; when we pray and whenever we study the sacred scriptures.

Let us allow Christ to bring us out of our graves.

COLLECTIONS 22 MARCH 2020

First Collection:	\$256.10
Second Collection Loose:	\$57.10
Planned Giving:	\$175.00

THANKYOU

Thank you to our parish community as we all adjust to our current situation. Please stay in touch with one another, and pray for one another during this time of social distancing.

CREATE YOUR OWN SACRED SPACE AT HOME

The Church may be closed but you can create your own sacred space at home:

1. Pick the right spot: Find an attractive and inviting spot in your home, such as a corner nook, top of a bookshelf, window sill or mantelpiece.

2. Choose a focal piece: This item will serve the purpose of drawing your eye, and therefore your attention, to the space. Eg your favorite holy image featuring Jesus, Mary, or your favorite saint or a religious statue. Choose something that has special meaning to you or your family. Our Blessed Mother is always a great choice!

3. Add Catholic items to your nook: add a crucifix, a rosary, Catholic prayer and/or meditation books, a bible, and a few prayer cards. You probably have many of these items already scattered throughout the house that you can bring together into one place.

4. Accessorise: In churches you don't find saint statues and holy images without fresh flowers and candles around them as a sign of faith, love, and devotion. Do the same in your prayer space to add a bit of reverence and beauty.

And that's it! Find some quiet time to read the Scriptures, listen to a podcast, pray the rosary, meditate on the stations of the cross or simply ask God to come into your heart and your home.