

Fifth Sunday of Lent

FutureChurch March 29, 2020 Online Liturgy of the Word

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of God who is Mother and Father to us
In the name of Jesus, our brother and our friend
In the name of the Spirit who nourishes and guides us

ALL: AMEN

Greeting

Leader: May the peace of Jesus, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you,

ALL: And also with you.

Introductory Remarks

John's Gospel frequently highlights discipleship of women—Samaritan woman, Martha, and commissioning of Mary of Magdala as the Apostle to the Apostles. Today, we read of Jesus' own grief over Lazaarus death, finds expression only after he sees that the grief of his dear friend Mary of Bethany—"and Jesus wept." This text witnesses that suffering invites a certain solidarity which can help alleviate our grief. Our incarnate God in Jesus suffers in solidarity with us—especially now during the fear and pain evoked by this pandemic. And just as surely as there is suffering, so too will there be joy once we pass through it. A joy which comes from belief in a suffering God who does not abandon us in our own time of suffering and death—but leads us to new life in spite of everything.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us pray.

Merciful God,
You showed your deep love for us
By sending Jesus to confound even the powers of death.

Come to our aid, as once you did for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus:
Call us forth from our own darkened tombs
And break the bonds which hold us,
That we may step courageously into new life.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life,
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

ALL: AMEN

LITURGY OF THE WORD

****Texts have been adapted for inclusive/expansive language****

First Reading

Lector: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel,

Thus says the Most High:
O my people, I will open your graves
and have you rise from them,
and bring you back to the land of Israel.

Then you shall know that I am God,
when I open your graves and have you rise from them,
O my people!

I will put my spirit in you that you may live,
and I will settle you upon your land;
thus you shall know that I God.

I have promised, and I will do it.

The word of God

All: Thanks be to God

Psalm

Psalmist: Our response is "With you, O God, there is mercy and fullness of life"
ALL: With you, O God, there is mercy and fullness of life

Psalmist: Out of the depths I cry to you, O God,
hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to my voice in supplication.
R. With you, O God, there is mercy and fullness of life

If you, O God, mark iniquities,
who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness,
that you may be revered.
R. With you, O God, there is mercy and fullness of life

I trust in you, my God;
my soul trusts in your word.
More than sentinels wait for the dawn,
let Israel wait for you.
R. With you, O God, there is mercy and fullness of life

For with you, O God, there is kindness
and plenteous redemption;
And you will redeem us
from all our iniquities.
R. With you, O God, there is mercy and fullness of life

Second Reading

Lector: A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans,

Friends in Christ:

Those who have given themselves over to worldly values
cannot please God.

But you are not among them.

On the contrary, you are in the spirit,
if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ.

But if Christ is in you,

although the body is dead because of sin,
the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
the one who raised Christ from the dead
will give life to your mortal bodies also,
through the divine Spirit dwelling in you.

ALL: The word of God
Thanks be to God

Gospel

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to John

ALL: Glory to you, O God.

Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus,
sent word to Jesus, saying, "Rabbi, the one you love is ill."

When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death,
but is for the glory of God, that God's Only Begotten may be glorified."

Now Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus.
So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he remained in the place where he was for two
days.
Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him;
while Mary stayed home with the mourners.

Martha said to Jesus, "Rabbi, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her, "Lazarus will rise."

Martha said, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life;
those who believe in me will live, even if they die;
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.
Do you believe this?"

"Yes," Martha replied. "I have come to believe that you are the Christ,
the Only Begotten of God, the One who is coming into the world."

Having said this, Martha went and brought Mary and some of the others to Jesus.

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said:
"Rabbi, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping and the friends who had come with her weeping, he
became perturbed and deeply troubled and said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said, "Come and see." And Jesus wept.

People in the crowd remarked, "See how he loved him."

But others said, "He made the blind person see; why couldn't he prevent Lazarus' death?"

Jesus was again deeply moved when they came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha said, "Rabbi, by now there will be a stench; it has been four days."

Jesus replied, "Didn't I assure you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone.

And raising his eyes to God in heaven, Jesus said, "I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me."

Then Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

And Lazarus came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.

So Jesus said to the crowd, "Untie him and let him go free."

Many of those who had come to console Martha and Mary saw what Jesus did and began to believe

The Good News of Our Salvation

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

– CWP Video: www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/03292020

FAITH SHARING

Questions for Shared Reflection:

1. *In their grief, Martha and Mary say to Jesus, "If you had been here, Lazarus would not have died." If Jesus were standing before you right now, what would you want to say to him?*
2. *Just as Jesus did not intend for Lazarus to die, but entered the situation, mourned with the others, and then transformed the situation; neither does God intend for or "send" this pandemic. How do you see God transforming our world or yourself, calling us out of our tombs, even now? What unbinding role can you play?*
3. *Krista Chinchilla, our preacher, asks: How is Jesus crying out to us? What keeps us bound? What do we need to do to untie ourselves?*

CONCLUDING RITES

Closing Prayer

Leader: Nourished by God's word and strengthened by this community,
Let us pray together,

ALL: Loving God, Holy One,

Your desire is for our wholeness and well-being.

We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.

We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened.

We ache for ourselves and our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future.

We pray: may love, not fear, go viral. Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.

Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity.

**Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,
You, the God who does not abandon,**

**You, the Holy One, breathing within us, breathing among us,
breathing around us, in our beautiful yet wounded world. AMEN**

"Prayer during a Pandemic" by Sr. Chris Koellhoffer, IHM

Leader: And may the God of hope fill us with every comfort and joy in believing.
May the peace of Christ abound in our hearts and minds.
and may the Holy Spirit gift and guide us
(making Sign of the Cross) now and forever,

ALL: AMEN