

From the Dean

The Archbishop has written several pastoral letters to all the faithful in the last week. They are worth reading. I was particularly struck by a passage in one of them which I would like to offer to you for your own prayerful reflection.

I also want to reassure you that, in these changed circumstances, the Church will continue to be a living sign of God's fidelity and God's loving presence. But the Church will have to do this in new ways: we will have to do this in new ways, for all of us, the community of disciples, are the Church. We may not be able to gather together in our churches, but we can recreate the Church in our homes. Long before Catholics in Australia were able to build big churches for the celebration of Mass, they gathered together in their families for the rosary around an image of Our Lady. We may not be able to offer each other the sign of peace at Mass but we can offer each other the gift of our sincere prayer. We may not be able to organise morning teas for the elderly in our parish halls but we can ensure that those who are lonely and afraid are not left to themselves, even if all we can do is ring them on the phone or leave a casserole on their front doorstep. As our practical capacity to reach out to others is curtailed our determination to be disciples of Jesus, who gave everything he had and was for us, can lead us to discover new ways to live out our Catholic faith.

Gathering as a household to pray the rosary or praying it individually. Contacting each other by means of the telephone or various apps and praying for each other. Looking out for the person in need in our street and offering practical assistance while maintaining safe distance (leaving food on the front doorstep). These are all examples of ways we live out our Catholic faith. What can you do as a disciple remembering that observing safe-distancing, avoiding unnecessary travel and limiting gatherings are all acts of charity for our neighbour? Following government directions and guidelines are not betrayals of our faith, because faith is always shaped by love, by charity. How can we love the God we cannot see, if we do not love our neighbour whom we can see?

Over two pages you will find an excerpt from the Sunday Gospel and reflections and suggestions for prayer alone or as a household. There are many other resources available. Please take a look at the Cathedral site. I recommend sacredspace.ie

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BEGIN WITH GOSPEL AND REFLECTION ON NEXT PAGE

3. LIVING THE GOSPEL - To see a man bound up for burial suddenly come walking from his tomb must have been an unnerving experience to say the least. However, Jesus calmly commands the astonished onlookers to "unbind him, let him go free." These words speak to us today as we come to the end of the Lenten season and approach the celebration of Easter. What are the things that 'bind' us? From what do we need to be released so that we may 'go free'? Are they bindings placed by ourselves or others? What will it take to be unbound?

4. QUESTION FOR REFLECTION AND SHARE

1. Do you have a relative that has died? If so, how did this relative enrich your life? What characteristics of hers or his do you share?
2. Our faith comforts us in the face of death, because we believe that we will be raised up, like Jesus. What do you think about that? How does it feel to think about your own death or the death of someone you care about?

5. INTERCESSION - What would you like to pray to God for: The Church, the World, our local community, your family and friends, those who are ill, loved ones, friends who have died.

6. Pray the "Our Father" and then you may wish to make the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads.

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EXPLORING THE WORD - FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR A

1. GOSPEL JN 11:1-45 - The sisters Martha and Mary 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, '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.

2. FR SEAN'S REFLECTION - The raising of Lazarus is not about death. Jesus says right at the beginning of this gospel passage: '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.' But everyone keeps misunderstanding: the disciples, Mary, Martha, the onlookers. Jesus tells the disciples that he delays that they might believe and when he eventually goes to Bethany, Thomas says, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' But he misunderstands despite his heroism; he is asked to believe, not to die as a martyr to the cause.

Martha and Mary do not believe. Martha calls Jesus, 'Teacher,' which he is, but he is more; he is Lord. Her belief in the resurrection is like that of many of the Jews; she believes that it is something which will happen at the end of time. It is not a belief in Jesus standing in front of her. Mary too joins the Jews in weeping, but she does not repeat all the words of Martha – she shows the beginning of true faith.

At the tomb Jesus prays aloud to his Father so 'that they may believe that you sent me'. The sign of the resurrection of Lazarus: Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Following Jesus, believing in Jesus is life, not death. We have journeyed the season of Lent to grow in our belief in the Son of God. Believing in him – believing him – loving him – following him who is the resurrection and the life; those who believe in him, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in him will never die.

CONTINUE WITH LIVING THE GOSPEL, QUESTIONS FOR SHARING AND REFLECTION, INTERCESSIONS, OUR FATHER AND BLESSING

**PROJECT
COMPASSION**
GO FURTHER TOGETHER

Fifth Sunday of Lent 29th March 2020

Tawonga is a 10-year-old girl, living with a disability. She lives in a village in northern Malawi in a region plagued by food insecurity and poverty. For most of her life, her parents have struggled to put meals on the table. Tawonga often had to miss school because she was too sick from hunger. The family also faced discrimination in their community due to her disability. Since participating in a Caritas Australia supported program, Tawonga's life has transformed. Her family now grows enough food to provide three meals a day, ending the struggle of malnutrition, and helping her thrive at school.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 so this transformational program can continue to empower vulnerable women, men and children, and strengthen the communities around them. Let's Go Further, Together. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.





Jesus brings Lazarus back to life



5th Sunday of Lent, Year A

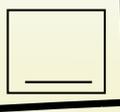
Fill in the missing word on each strip of cloth to find out what the letters in each box spell.

Jesus' good



r__n_ Lazarus was very sick.

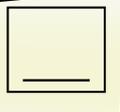
Martha and M



__ were sad when their brother died.

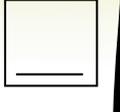
"Lazarus will __v_ again", said Jesus.

Jesus went to the opened



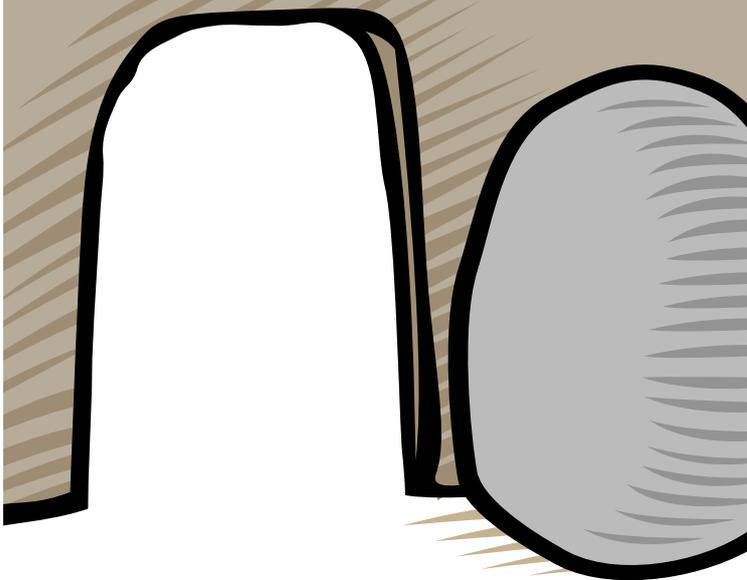
__b and prayed.

Lazarus walked out of



__s tomb alive.

Draw Lazarus leaving the tomb wrapped in strips of cloth.



Martha and Mary were sad when Lazarus died. They missed their brother, but still they showed faith in Jesus. What do you think Martha and Mary said to Lazarus when he came out of the tomb?



Jesus brings Lazarus back to life

My name is

Martha and Mary were sad when their brother Lazarus died. Draw Jesus reassuring them.



Draw Lazarus leaving the tomb after Jesus raised him from the dead.

