

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

5th Sunday of Lent Year A

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.

“...whoever lives and believes
in me will never die.”

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

(Shorter version)

³The sisters sent this message to Jesus, “Lord the man you love is ill.” ⁴On receiving this message, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death but in God’s glory, and through it the son of God will be glorified.” ⁵Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days ⁷before saying to his disciples, “Let us go to Judea.”

¹⁷On arriving Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already.

²⁰When Martha had heard that Jesus had come she went out to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “If you had been here my brother

*You are invited to read the
Gospel passage attentively,
respectfully and reverently
as a gift of God.*



would not have died,²² but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God he will grant you.” ²³“Your brother,” said Jesus to her, “will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said, “I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said, “I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she said, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.”

³³“At the sight of her tears and those of the Jews who followed her, Jesus said in great distress with a sigh that came straight from the heart, ³⁴“Where have you put him?” They said,“Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus wept; ³⁶and the Jews said,“See how much he loved him!” ³⁷But there were some who remarked,“He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man’s death?” ³⁸Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb; it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. ³⁹Jesus said,“Take the stone away!” Martha said to him,“Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.” ⁴⁰Jesus replied,“Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven and said, ⁴²“Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of those who stand around me, so that they may believe that it was you who sent me.” ⁴³When he said this, he cried out in a loud voice,“Lazarus, here! Come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them,“Unbind him, let him go free.” ⁴⁵Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

Reading

Jesus is a close friend of Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus who is very ill. Even though he does not set out immediately to be at the bed- side of the sick man Jesus trusts that Lazarus is in God’s hands.

Overcome with grief, Mary stays in the house while Martha is questioning why this has happened. Jesus is adamant that love never comes to an end and that Lazarus continues to live in their love and God’s love.

Overcome by his own grief, Jesus wept. Trusting in the Father, he demonstrates the power of love in the rolling away of the stone and raising Lazarus to new life. This is a story of how love conquers death.

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”

v44. “Unbind him, let him go free.”

Can you enter into the experience of Lazarus by remembering an occasion of languishing in the tomb of grief, depression, anxiety, guilt, failure, rejection or addiction, and you experienced the power of someone’s love and friendship to unbind you and set you free?

v26. “whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

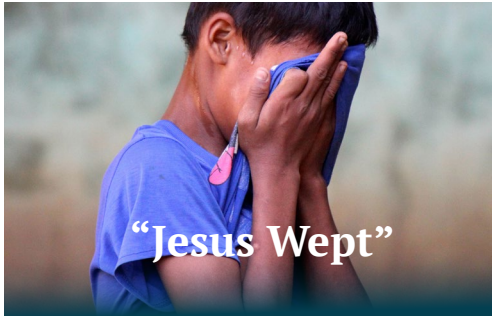
Can you remember a “Jesus person” who manifested an extraordinary faith giving rise to an inner freedom, dignity and peace in the face of terrible loss and suffering; in truth nothing could ever destroy them- not even death?

v20. “Mary remained sitting in the house”

Can you remember an experience of profound grief that left you paralyzed in body, mind and heart? At the time you were carried by the faith and friendship of others.

v35. “Jesus wept”

Can you remember when you found release and comfort in the healing power of tears?



the “tomb.” Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed, and even despairing, at times. Lord, have mercy.

Father, there are so many of my brothers and sisters in “tombs” at this time. Give me the sensitivity and compassion to draw close to them and to stay with them until they are “unbound” and can “go free”.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God’s presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “**Jesus Wept**”.

Responding

Having recognised God’s presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

Father, I remember the terrible days of life “in the tomb”: days of fear, loneliness and anxiety. I thank you for those strong, compassionate voices that have inspired me to trust, to hope and to live one day at a time.

Father, I ask forgiveness for my lack of trust during the times of darkness in

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight has been given to you into the meaning of...new life love, faith, hope, friendship, trust? **Love, compassion and solidarity have the power to raise us to new life.**



Children

Reading

Jesus receives the sad news that his good friend Lazarus is sick. Jesus delays going to see him and when he arrives in Bethany a few days later, it seems that he is too late because Lazarus has died. Martha, Lazarus' sister, is disappointed that Jesus did not come sooner, but she also confirms her faith, trust and hope in Jesus. Jesus turns the sadness of Martha and her sister, Mary, to joy with the good news that he is coming with the offer of new life. Many people come to believe in Jesus after he raises Lazarus to new life.

Recognising

Can you remember meeting a 'Martha person' who kept the faith and trusted in God despite the tough moments of their life?

Can you remember a time when your life was particularly challenging, when you were in the tomb with Lazarus, and a 'Jesus person' called your name, encouraged you to live a new life to the full?

Responding

Father, I thank you for the friends that I can call on to bring me life, particularly in my times of need, so that I can enjoy Your gift of life to the full.

Father, I am sorry for the times that I failed to trust in Your life-giving goodness and lost hope by turning away from You.

Father, I ask that my faith continues to grow so that I may trust and hope in You with all my heart.

Resting

Rest in the refreshing presence of the Father by repeating "I BELIEVE" for as long as it is possible. May you be filled with trust and hope as you are drawn deeper into the presence of the Father.

Reflecting

Hope is found by putting your faith and trust in people who encourage you and bring you life.

Lenten Lectio Series - Lectio Booklet-Journeying with the Gospels of Lent- Year A (Now available). Meditate on the Way- Living the Word Podcast accompanies the series (Available on all podcast platforms). Further resources: lectio.newrydominican.com

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.