

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Give me justice, O God,
and plead my cause against a nation that is
faithless.

From the deceitful and cunning rescue me,
for you, O God, are my strength.

COLLECT

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unit of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ez 37:12-14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

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.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 129 (130)

Response:

**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.

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.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the
Lord;
whoever believes in me will never die.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

GOSPEL

Jn 11:1-45

(For shorter form John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45
read between ><)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in
the village of Bethany with his two sisters, Mary
and Martha, and he was ill. It was the same
Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who
anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped
his feet with her hair. >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." < The disciples said, "Rabbi, it is not
long since the Jews wanted to stone you; are
you going back again?" Jesus replied;

"Are there not twelve hours in the day?"

A man can walk in the daytime without
stumbling

because he has the light of this world to see by;
but if he walks at night he stumbles,
because there is no light to guide him."

He said that and then added, "Our friend
Lazarus is resting, I am going to wake him."

The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he is able to
rest he is sure to get better." The phrase Jesus
used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they
thought that by "rest" he meant "sleep," so
Jesus put it plainly, "Lazarus is dead; and for
your sake I am glad I was not there because
now you will believe. But let us go to him." Then
Thomas - known as the Twin - said to the other
disciples, "Let us go too, and die with him." >On
arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been
in the tomb for four days already.<Bethany
is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and
many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to
sympathise with them over their brother. >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." < When she had said this,
she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a
low voice, "The Master is here and wants to see
you." Hearing this, Mary got up quickly and went
to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village;
he was still at the place where Martha had met
him. When the Jews who were in the house
sympathising with Mary saw her get up so
quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking
that she was going to the tomb to weep there.
Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw
him she threw herself at his feet, saying, "Lord,

if you had been here, my brother would not
have died." 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, "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 around 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.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Hear us, almighty God,
and, having instilled in your servants
the teachings of the Christian faith,
graciously purify them
by the working of this sacrifice.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Everyone who lives and believes in me
will not die for ever, says the Lord.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

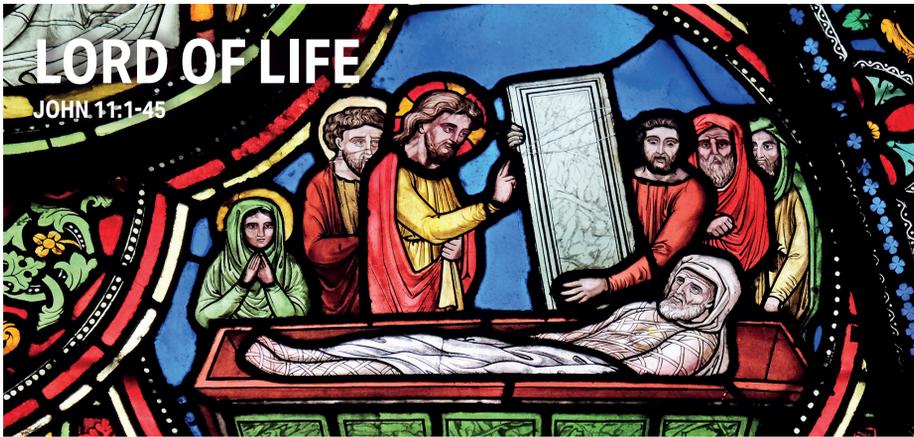
We pray, almighty God,
that we may always be counted among the
members of Christ,
in whose Body and Blood we have communion.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

Sunday Message

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year A • 22 March 2026 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 1



LORD OF LIFE

JOHN 11:1-45

The story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead is the last great sign or miracle Jesus works in John's Gospel. It is a powerful demonstration that Jesus is the life of the world.

Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, is ill. His sisters ask Jesus to come to see him. But Jesus delays a while. By the time he finally arrives, Lazarus has already been in the tomb for four days. Upset and disappointed, Lazarus's sister, Martha, goes to meet him. In the conversation that follows, Jesus describes who he is and makes an astonishing promise: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Later, gathered around the tomb with Martha, Mary, his disciples and some friends who had come to console the grieving sisters, Jesus works a sign to show his power and to demonstrate that he is indeed the "resurrection and the life." He asks that the stone sealing the tomb be removed. Then he prays, and bids Lazarus to come out. Still in his burial shroud, Lazarus emerges alive.

For John, the raising of Lazarus is a sign that Jesus has the power to give eternal life. It is also a promise that on the last day he will raise our mortal flesh.

Lazarus, the one whom Jesus loves, can be seen as representing all those whom Jesus loves. Just as Jesus gave life to Lazarus, he gives life to us, too. This is the Good News. It is the very foundation of our faith. ■

REFLECT

Our faith is a precious gift. Sometimes we can forget just how extraordinarily precious this faith of ours is, how fragile. It's a gift we should treasure and never take for granted.

Faith changes everything. In early 2022 Richard Gaillardetz was discussing with his wife what to do when he retired in a few years from his position as professor of systematic theology at Boston University. He had been dean of theology there as well as a former president of the Theological Association of America. He had a special interest in Vatican II and had written and lectured widely on the Council and its documents.

Richard was looking forward to his retirement - and then all changed, changed utterly. On 22/2/22 - a date he said was very

easy to remember - he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given a maximum of 18 months to live. On that day, all his plans - for retirement, the books he was going to write, the places he and his wife were going to visit - went out the window. He had to manage instead for his treatment and his death. He had to put his affairs in order.

Richard began to write a blog about his illness, which was published as a book after his death. He died on November 7, 2023. In the book *While I breathe, I hope*, Richard writes beautifully about the consolation his faith gave him as he approached his end. He believed wholeheartedly in the Gospel, and that belief sustained him to the last.

Richard Gaillardetz knew that the gift of faith offers us two of the most wonderful

SAY
Say with Martha: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into this world."

PRAY

Pray for your deceased loved ones and the deceased members of your local community. Give thanks for their lives. Ask the Lord of life to take them to himself.

DO

There is an old saying: What a man's faith is, he is. In other words, a person's faith shapes the kind of person he or she is. Think about how you live your faith. Does your faith in God shape who you are? Can people see it?

LEARN

Our God is the God of life - not of death

The Christian believes in the resurrection of the dead. This is at the core of our faith

The Christian opposes anything that is not life-giving



consolations. First, the knowledge that God is with us in every minute of every day, and that with God by our side, there is no trial, hardship or setback we cannot face or overcome. God always holds us close. God's loving presence always sustains us.

The second consolation is the promise of eternal life. One of the most beautiful lines in all of scripture assures us: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of people what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9). We know that our death is not an exit to oblivion but the threshold to a new, transformed, glorified life with Christ in God forever. When our time comes, however it comes, we know, as Richard Gaillardetz knew, that we need have no fear. ■