

## 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.**

## RESP. PSALM

Psalm 129

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 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 at 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.**

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

**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.

## PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

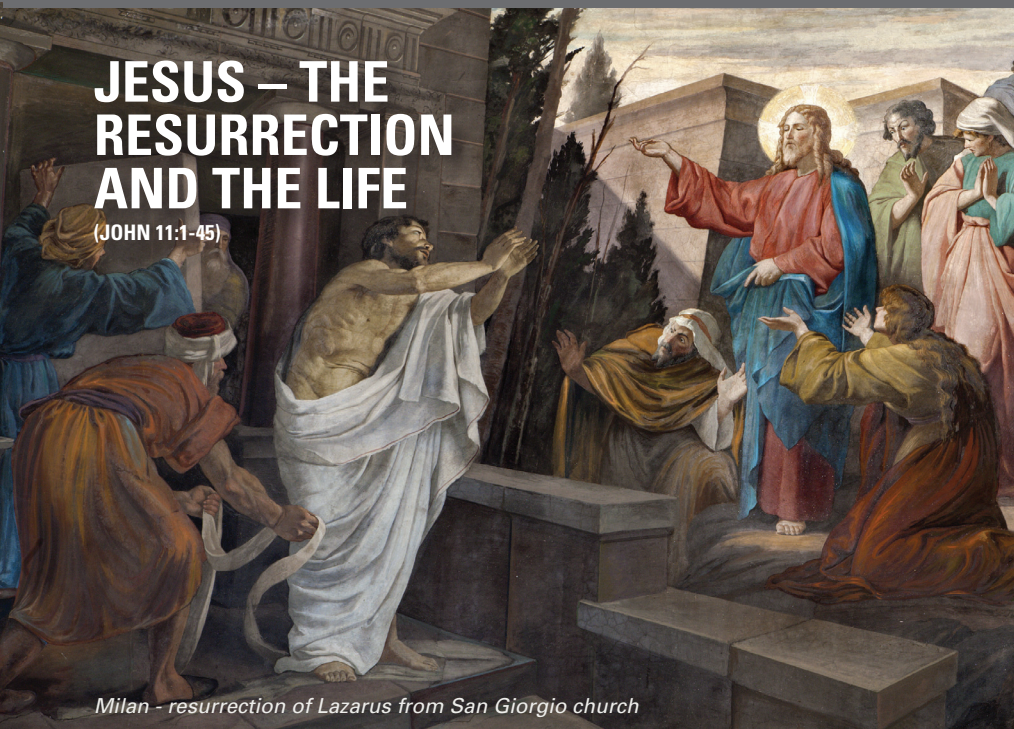
Bless, O Lord, your people,  
who long for the gift of your mercy,  
and grant that what, at your prompting, they  
desire  
they may receive by your generous gift.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## THE WORD

Year A • Season Colour: Purple • Psalter week 1

### JESUS – THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

(JOHN 11:1-45)



Milan - resurrection of Lazarus from San Giorgio church

**“Lazarus! Come out!” This command of Jesus is the climax of the signs he gives in his public ministry. In the course of the episode, Jesus reveals himself as the resurrection and the life for his disciples, that is, for those who accept him and his message.**

The fact that Lazarus is actually dead and not simply acutely ill, or, as the disciples think, sleeping, is emphasised in the story. It is at this point in the Gospel that the verb to die is used in connection with Jesus. The tragic irony is that it is Jesus’ restoring Lazarus to life which is the catalyst for his own death on the cross.

In this story we are told of Jesus’ human emotions: he loves Martha, Mary and Lazarus; he refers to Lazarus as our friend; he experiences great distress; he gives a sigh straight from the heart and finally he weeps. John does not usually present Jesus in this way.

In the Synoptic Gospels, the raising of a dead person would be understood as a miracle, an act of power. In the Fourth Gospel it is a sign. A sign is something which points beyond itself: so we should see the physical restoring of Lazarus to life as telling us something about Jesus. Martha accepts that Jesus is a rabbi from God who can perform wonderful signs because God is with him, but this is a misunderstanding. The evangelist makes it clear that the resurrection is not an event but the person of Jesus. The person who accepts Jesus lives in the spirit now and will live on the other side of death. The purpose of raising Lazarus from the dead is that the disciples should believe and that Jesus should be glorified. This will happen at the crucifixion, which for John is the exaltation of Jesus in glory.

There are similarities between the burial of Lazarus and the burial of Jesus, for instance the cave with the stone over the entrance, the cloths round the body and the face: but the differences when the tombs are visited are more important. They tell us that Lazarus was restored to the life he had lost, but Jesus is risen to a new life altogether. ■

## REFLECT

In the Funeral Mass we find the phrase, “Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended”. For Lazarus, as for the other people Jesus is reported as raising from the dead, life is restored, not changed. Lazarus will have to die again. As with all the signs, this action tells us something about who Jesus really is. He is aware of the communion between himself and the Father and his prayer at Lazarus’ tomb expresses total trust. He is the resurrection and the life for those who accept him: he is the one God has sent with full authority, even over death. The raising of Lazarus is the moment when the glory of God is revealed to the disciples so that they may believe. It is the beginning of the process by which Jesus will be glorified on the Cross. That is when he will gather all people to himself. The crucifixion we hear about on Good Friday is Jesus being enthroned as King and Priest. ■

## LEARN

The body of Lazarus is restored to the life he lost, Lazarus will have to die again.

The body of Jesus is not discovered in the tomb; the differences in the accounts suggest that his life now is of a different order to that before.

We believe in the resurrection of the body, not the resurrection of the flesh.

## SAY

**“I am the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me will never die” (John 11:25).**

## DO

Visit or think about a cemetery. Remember that Jesus declared himself to be the Resurrection and the Life for his disciples. At baptism, we entered into that risen life: do you live as though you really believe it?

