

## Sunday 'Spiritual Communion'

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

### Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

**We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.**

### Opening Sentences Reminding us we are on Our Lenten Journey

In Lent we bring what we have,  
**a faith worn and rich, a faith born in the wilderness**  
Let us fast, let us give time, let us remember  
**that we might reclaim colourless places and break through hardened surfaces**



### Prayers of Preparation and Confession

**Almighty God to whom all hearts are open,all desires known,and from whom no secrets are hidden:cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,that we may perfectly love you,and worthily magnify your holy name;through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Reflect on the week and on your relationships.

- What good things have come from God this week?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow?

You may wish to say or pray

**Lord, have mercy.**  
**Christ, have mercy.**  
**Lord, have mercy.**

A reading from the Gospel

Read John 11:1-45 (A reflection attached to the end of the service sheet)

## Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer.

**Our Father...**

Let us give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now and in the week ahead.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally in the bread and wine, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'. Be with me and those whom I love and pray for as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care..

**Lord, in days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful;  
in days of challenge, make us stronger in you;  
in days of emptiness, take possession of us;  
in days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross.**

Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**



The Peace of the Lord be always with you

## Reflection on John 11 The Story of Lazarus' Resurrection

Let us take a moment to reflect on the story of a man brought back to life. Consider again the language used in this passage we have read today. Let it allow the story to evoke for a moment the deep imagery of this story of life and death and rebirth ! Imagine a passionate woman who has wept whilst kneeling at Jesus feet. Who has anointed those feet with costly perfume then wiped them with her own hair! Imagine a vicious band of religious leaders, arrogant Rabbi's who dominate the Jewish community, angry and already having tried to stone Jesus. Imagine a brother and a best friend now in the throes of death. A community seeking to console and comfort and advise the grieving family.

What do we see? Fear. Suffering. Desperation. Love. Devotion. Death. Decay. Loss. Tears. Anger. Stench. Hatred. Belief. The stuff of life. This is not a story of heaven but a story of earth. A story of all that it means to be alive and to suffer and to die and to grieve. A story of family and community. Of brotherhood of friendship. It is a story which acknowledges our world and its chaos and struggle. It talks of our disorientation and a roller coaster of emotion. It is the story of Jesus not above our world and far off but close and involved. For we are told ... Jesus began to weep!

We find ourselves in 2020 in a moment in history where the emotion and truth of this passage is acknowledged in our own situation. We are uncertain. We are vulnerable. We have questions. We don't know what to do. And the story of Lazarus reminds us that in these moments Jesus is with us. He is not removed from our story but here in the midst of it. He stands with us looking at all that the world faces .. and He too weeps.

The question is who will we be like in this story? Will we be like those who rejected this solidarity with the words .. if you are God why haven't you saved us from this suffering? Will we be like those who in their anger sought to stone and later to crucify the One who shares our pain? Will we like Thomas who in hopeless devotion says .. let us follow Him even though we do not understand? Will we be like the mourners who have no faith that the situation can be rescued? Will we be those who, like Mary, question where God was in our time of need? Will we be those who in reticent obedience roll the stone away despite a reluctance to do so?

This morning we face the question who will we be in the Divine Story of Lazarus' which in truth is the story of every person's life. In our fear. Our suffering. Our desperation. Our love. Our devotion. Our death. Our decay. Our loss. Our tears. Our anger. Our hatred. Our belief. Who will we be?

This is the story of Lazarus but this is the story of humanity too. This is the story of our world, our nation, our community, our families, ourselves as we face the challenge of this current health crisis and all that it brings with it. So the question is who will you be in this story? What will you do with this moment where life and death and fear and hope and anger meet together.

For the Christian the story of Lazarus can direct our lives. It is why it is so important to hold dear our Scriptures and traditions in these times. For here in this story is a message of resurrection hope. Here is the message:

Jesus is with us in our loss and suffering. Jesus weeps. Jesus prays 'Father thank you that you have heard my prayer. Father thank you for gathering my tears in your Divine chalice. Father hear my prayer now'. Jesus utters the words Lazarus come forth. Unbind him and let him go. He utters those same words with our name too. Will we have the faith to come forth and walk into the light. This is the call of the Lenten journey. From outside the tomb the words 'Come forth'. Let us begin our walk towards the Light of Easter that is soon to dawn upon us and to the great hope of resurrection Love.