

Welcome



Dear All

You are receiving this because you have been kind enough to respond to an invitation from the churches of the Benefice of Bishops Lydeard.

The idea is that, instead of the notice sheet produced just for St Mary's in Bishops Lydeard, we provide for those who wish to be involved something similar giving details each week of the Collect for the Sunday and the Gospel reading, followed by a few words from me or from Katharine to help us to reflect – if only for just a couple of minutes. There is no obligation to use this at all, if it's not "your thing", but we hope that there will be something which will appeal to you in what we're offering.

You are welcome to share this with anyone else you know who you feel might benefit from it – family, neighbours, friends, work colleagues. Share away!

I shall be praying the Eucharist/Holy Communion privately at home on Sunday 29th March and David and I pray Morning and Evening Prayer every day but not necessarily at exactly the same time because of other commitments which may crop up unexpectedly! If you have someone you would like to be prayed for, or a situation or anything else – do let me know and your prayer will be included in our worship. If you would like to contribute a prayer to be included in this notice sheet – that's fine too.

Love

Revd. Maureen

The Collect

So, the Collect (prayer for the day) for the 5th Sunday of Lent, known as Passion Sunday (when Passiontide begins) is:

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection
of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive
and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

This week's Gospel

The Gospel reading for this Sunday is from [St John's Gospel, chapter 11, verses 1-45](#) (sorry, rather a long reading). For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the Bible, it is in the New Testament and the last of the four Gospels which come first in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke – and John. This could be a useful exercise in finding your way around what may be an unfamiliar book!

Reflection on the Gospel reading, just a few points to note:

- Jesus' relationship with the family of Lazarus is explained; we are reminded about who Mary is and how she knew Jesus. The message to Jesus is about "he whom you love".
- Jesus' response is puzzling: why does he delay, and why do his disciples seem confused by his words?
- Those who had come to console the sisters about the death of their brother had walked quite a distance. The family must have been well known and much loved.
- Both sisters approach Jesus separately and at different times, both saying the same words; should these words be interpreted as a reproach, or almost a statement of belief?
- The depth of Jesus' affection for the dead man is estimated by the fact that he does not just cry, but "weeps". Is also an element of reproach here too, in verse 37.
- After composing himself in verse 39, Jesus prays to his Father and then commands Lazarus to come out of the tomb.
- Lazarus comes out, is unbound and released back into the world and we are told that – because of this – many people believed in Jesus.

At this time in which we find ourselves living, this passage may give us hope and reassurance but it may also pose more questions. Many people may be asking "Why does God allow such suffering and death to happen to so many people?" Others are asking, "Where is God in all this, in this situation in which we find ourselves today?"

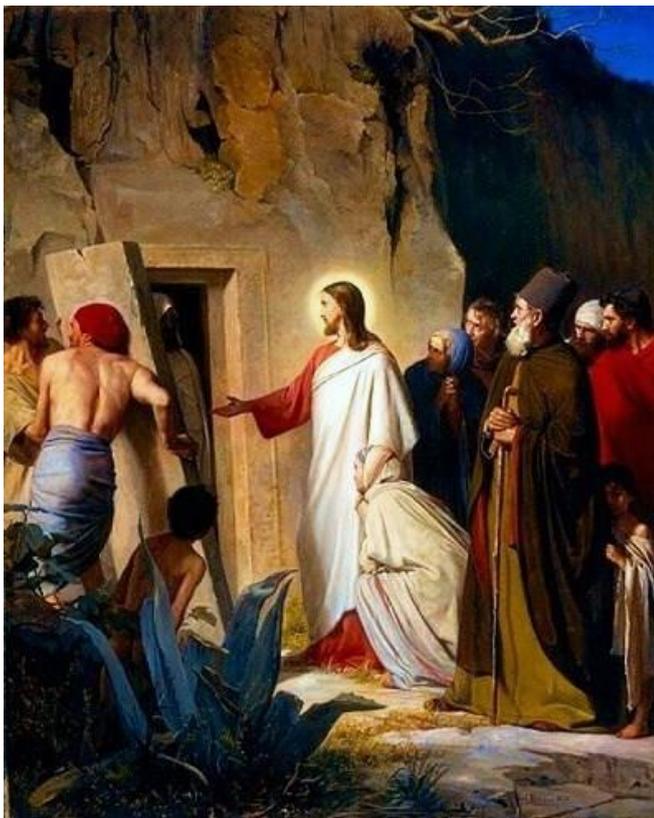
Continued...

This week's Gospel (continued)

Well, I think this Gospel reading shows Jesus to be human, to be distressed and compassionate and that God suffers with us too and shares in our plight. It also portrays Jesus' unfailing trust and faith in God his Father, and that his prayer will be answered.

Some Bibles – either at the front or the back – have suggested readings or extracts which can be found to address particular circumstances. If you have a Bible, have a look to see whether yours has this to offer. Such pages can be a great comfort and help in times of trouble, confusion and a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. If you find it helpful, use these pages to provide whatever you feel that you need right now.

Today we come together by sharing this communication and by using it in whatever way suits us best – but we are united by it, and share our concerns, our anxieties – just as Lazarus' sisters did. We share the distress which Jesus felt, and hopefully we can share our belief that our prayers will be answered.



Raising Lazarus, Oil on Copper Plate, 1875, Carl Heinrich Bloch

Until next week, my friends: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance and be gracious to you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and give you his peace.

Amen.

A poem by Sylvie Kennedy from Lydeard St. Lawrence

Oh how I love isolation
It's the answer to all of my dreams!
No timetables, pressures or deadlines
No falling apart at the seams!!

My days are just one long languish
Perusing on what to do next,
so many people out there to text.

There's a lesson in every misfortune
If Corona could be called that!
The old friends with whom you've reconnected
Who'd have thought you would ever do that!!!

It's a cloud with a small silver lining
So let's eat chocolate then
stop feeling guilty and pining.

I am stocked up with loo rolls and hand sanitiser
But most important for sanity,
is being stocked up with Prosecco!

You have to address your priorities
never let your standards slip
How could I survive after 6ish
Without having my regular sip!!!

Avoid at all costs going shopping
It's a nightmare out there, that's a fact!
You are herded along with your trolley
And spaced out along a marked track!!

You feel guilty when picking up loo rolls
And glance shiftily from side to side
Though you've as much right as the next one
It's the rule to which you must abide!!

I've had to abandon my trips out.....
Taking my new car with sunshine roof for a spin!!
The police are now waiting to catch you
They stop you and send you back in!!

So let's carry on all 'me hearties'!
We'll sail through this storm like a dream!
Remembering to swab down everywhere,
To keep all perfectly clean!!

How I love this isolation!
Inflicted on me without choice,
much the same as my cottage,
if ever it gets finished, hmmm!
I will dance, sing and rejoice!!!!

*To you all, be well and be jolly,
with best wishes, from Sylv xx*