

Collect for the 5th Sunday of Lent

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings today:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' ⁴Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that

Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹²The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

Jesus the Resurrection and the Life

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

Jesus Weeps

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' ³⁷But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for (cont.)

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(cont.)

four days.' ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Next week's readings – Palm Sunday

Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 21:1-11

Please remember in your prayers:

- Bishop Graham, Bishop Alan and Bishop Jonathan;
- today the Primates' Task Group calls for a period of prayer and repentance in the Anglican Communion.
- all retired clergy for their valuable work and support;
- families and family life, especially those adapting to the new routines of home schooling;
- those who live or work in Wells Close, Howland Rd, Clarendon Rd;
- those who are unwell or in any kind of trouble including: Mary, Sue & Andrew, Ken, Pam Thomas and David Homan;
- those known to us who have died recently & their families – Tony Walpole;
- the anniversaries of the late Maurice Harrod, Peter Singleton, Shirley Way.

Bishops' Letter

The most recent letter (24th March) to the churches of the Diocese may be found on the front page of the Diocesan website. I would strongly encourage you to check this website regularly as fresh notices and messages are posted often on a daily basis at the moment. Similarly the Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org.uk) has a lot of useful information and links for prayer which are especially valuable. Our own church website has a link to these and other resources which are well worth following up.

The Beacon

It has been agreed the April edition of the Beacon will not be delivered house to house in order to protect our deliverers and to reduce footfall around the town. Copies will be placed in Tesco in the free newspaper section near the entrance and also in Benbow's. If you are shopping for essentials and know of a friend or neighbour who you are already delivering shopping to then please pick a copy up for them. As always the Beacon will be available online via the Church website.

Standing order forms

Thank you to those who have already been in touch to request a form to complete and send to your bank to arrange your regular giving by standing order. This is by far the best way to manage your church giving even under normal circumstances as it enables a regularity in the church's cash flow. In the current context with all services suspended along with our Thursday fund raising activities it is even more vital. If you would like me to post you a form please phone or email and I will post you one.

Since Keith and I wrote our respective messages to you all last week much has changed. In line with the advice received from the Diocese on Monday evening the church is now locked and will remain so until further notice. Along with the other measures and guidelines from the Government, all of which are set in place for our protection and must be welcomed, this will hopefully help everyone to restrict their personal footfall and to stay at home whenever possible.

Many of you have been in touch by phone and email to express your appreciation for last week's service which Keith expertly videoed and placed on the website. Thank you for your kind feedback. From now on we will be using audio rather than video recording and I hope this works efficiently in terms of the technology for you and you find it helpful.

My thanks to Revd Oliver Folkard who has written this week's reflection. We are aiming to keep with the usual rota for preaching where possible even if I will be reading the script provided by the preacher for the week.

I have spent much of this week going through various lists to ascertain how to best organise phone support/contact or practical help around the congregation. I hope as many of you as possible will be contacted on a regular basis by either myself or others who have volunteered for this task. If you know of anyone who falls sick or would appreciate a call please contact me as follows: revmason@btinternet.com or phone the Rectory Office (01328 862268.) If your query is a general administrative one please continue to use admin@fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk

Francis

**Website – fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk
Facebook - @fakenhamparishchurch**

Worship this week

Please look on the church website for recordings of worship. Technology has its uses!

The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. God is close to those who trust in him.

Nahum 1.7

