

Breaking **The Word** of today



"Lazarus, come out"

Today's readings bring us to one of the most heartbreaking events of any of our lives, but particularly at this time of Covid-19, namely a funeral. We've seen very sad pictures of funerals with no one in attendance, and hear of restrictions and decisions that no one would want to make. We pray for all bereaved people at this time.

In the long version of the Gospel we see confusion between Jesus and the apostles about what to do. It mirrors the confusion and uncertainty of our civil and religious leaders about what to do and when to do it. We pray for them.

We hear and almost experience the grief, frustration and anger of Martha and Mary. We think of the bereaved at this time. We think also of those grieving the loss of livelihood, freedom and way of life we have taken for granted.

Jesus comes and reassures them by his presence and his tears. Looking at the crucifix in St Peter's Square, for the Pope's blessing and address on Friday evening, and the rain running down it, it was not hard to imagine the tears of Jesus at this time.

Jesus gives them hope. 'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though they die, they will live...'

We can imagine Lazarus lying in the tomb. Living in lockdown, we are so limited during these lovely Spring days. '**Lazarus, come out**', Jesus cries. We too can look forward to being called out of this time of quarantine, and make resolutions about what we might do differently, when this is over. But maybe we don't have to wait until then. Maybe we can make the most of this time for ourselves, our family or someone nearby, in line with HSE guidelines, for their (and your own) welfare.

God says, through the prophet Ezekiel, that he is going to 'open...raise...lead you back...put my spirit in you...resettle you'. These words were spoken at a time of crisis for the people of Israel and we accept them as a promise from God for ourselves, our families, community and our world.

'The spirit of God has made his home in you', St Paul tells the Romans and ourselves. The truth of that statement is seen in our efforts to live our faith at this time, with no Mass or public worship. God is in our efforts to make the most of this time for ourselves and others. God is in our efforts at personal and family prayer. God is in the courage and compassion of our healthcare workers. In the dedication and good humour of those still working in retail, utilities, security services. God is in the decision makers and the ways we implement their advice for the good of all, especially the vulnerable.

We will all remember this Lent of 2020 ! We pray for each other and pray for a speedy end to this crisis, and act accordingly, by following the government and HSE guidelines.

Fr Gerry Boyle

5th Sunday of Lent