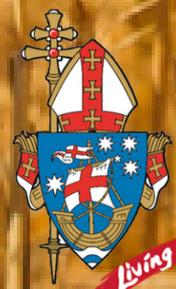


'I have  
come,  
that you may  
have life'

Lenten  
Reflection  
Year A  
2023



Catholic  
Archdiocese  
of Adelaide

Living Catholic

# Introduction

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Scripture readings set down for the Sundays of Lent in Cycle A are particularly appropriate for those who are seeking baptism at Easter. For this reason, this year also provides a great opportunity for those already baptised to reflect more deeply upon the true significance of Baptism and its effect on who we are and the way we live our lives. Early in his pontificate Pope Francis described Lent as ‘a “strong” time of conversion’, and a time ‘to live our baptism with greater profundity.’ If we do that, he said, we will be well prepared for the ‘Church’s annual celebration of the saving mysteries of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, during the Easter Triduum.’

The Gospel of Ash Wednesday is part of the Sermon on the Mount. This particular passage deals with almsgiving, prayer and fasting and Jesus gives us some surprising information about how to live with real integrity: let us not parade our ‘goodness’ before others but go about our prayer, fasting and almsgiving quietly and unobtrusively; what matters most is not what others think of us, but that we should walk with Jesus and follow his example.

On the First Sunday of Lent we go with Jesus to the desert. One striking feature of a desert environment is the silence. Our modern world is filled with noise and bustle, distracting us from the quiet place where we can hear the gentle voice of God’s spirit speaking to us. Perhaps some time away from our electronic ‘devices’ might provide such an opportunity.

The Second Sunday of Lent finds us on a mountain – a topography of great significance for the Jewish people since it was on Mount Sinai that God gave Moses the tablets of the Law and on Mt Zion that Jerusalem and the Temple were built. But the message from the mountaintop today is: ‘This is my Son, the Beloved ... listen to him!’

The Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent are set in the more 'everyday' context of village life – at a well, in a street, and at the home of friends. For the Samaritan woman and the man born blind, the encounter with Jesus could be described as 'accidental'. But for both the encounter was life-changing. In both instances it was Jesus who made the first approach – to a woman who was obviously 'on the outer' because she had to come to the village well in the heat rather than the cool of the day, and to a man considered a sinner because he had been born blind. Both were willing to receive what Jesus offered and both were transformed by their faith in him.

The Fifth Sunday brings to us the story of Lazarus raised from the dead. Martha and Mary were already familiar with Jesus and indeed great friends of his. They already had great faith in Jesus and their faith was rewarded. Lazarus was raised again to life and revealed that Jesus truly had the power over life and death. But this event also set the stage for Jesus' own resurrection – which did not merely resuscitate him to the life he had previously been living, but transformed his body completely, giving us a glimpse of our own future after we have passed through death's door.

We have forty days at our disposal to sit with God's Word and contemplate both in the silence of our own hearts and in small groups with fellow parishioners or community members the enormity of God's graciousness in sending Christ to reveal to us the love poured out on each one of us. Jesus himself tells us that he is the good shepherd who has come that the sheep (who are us) 'may have life, and have it to the full' (Jn 10:10).

As we journey through Lent to Easter let us be thankful for the new life we received in Baptism and determine that we will live it out ever more fully and follow ever more closely in the footsteps of Christ.

+ Pat O'Regan

+Patrick O'Regan DD

**Archbishop of Adelaide**



# Ash Wednesday

Joel 2: 12-18

Psalm 50: 3-6, 12-14, 17

Corinthians 5: 20 - 6: 2

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 50: 3-6, 12-14, 17

**R. Be merciful, O Lord,  
for we have sinned**

Have mercy on me, God,  
in your kindness.

In your compassion blot out my offence.  
O wash me more and more from my  
guilt and cleanse me from my sin. **R.**

My offences truly I know them;  
my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned:  
what is evil in your sight I have done. **R.**

A pure heart create for me, O God,  
put a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from  
your presence,  
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R.**

Give me again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.  
O Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth shall declare your praise. **R.**

## GOSPEL

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward.

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'



## Reflection

Lent is a season of grace and to achieve this grace we need to journey along with Jesus to part take in His passion, death, and Resurrection, wherein we introspect our own life and come to newness of life.

In this season, the Church encourages to a life of prayer, abstinence and engagement in charitable works. It is also an opportunity to mend one's ways and to bridge our relationship with God and our neighbours. Almsgiving is our commitment to others as pilgrims, reaching out to others who are in need, to help others experience providential care of God.

During this season of Lent may our journey with Jesus be less a time for concentrating on external practices and more a time for working on internal disciplines like abstaining from our sins of pride, selfishness, self-righteousness, hatred etc. which will help us grow spiritually and come closer to God.

Have a grace-filled Lenten season!

### Invitation to prayer

What are our plans for this Lenten season? Does this plan include anything new from the previous plans? How can I remain faithful in my journey during Lent?

Do I desire to renew my own spiritual life and long for the gift of mercy and love of Jesus?

What do prayer, almsgiving and abstinence mean to me and how can I be committed to this?

### Prayer for the week

*Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned*

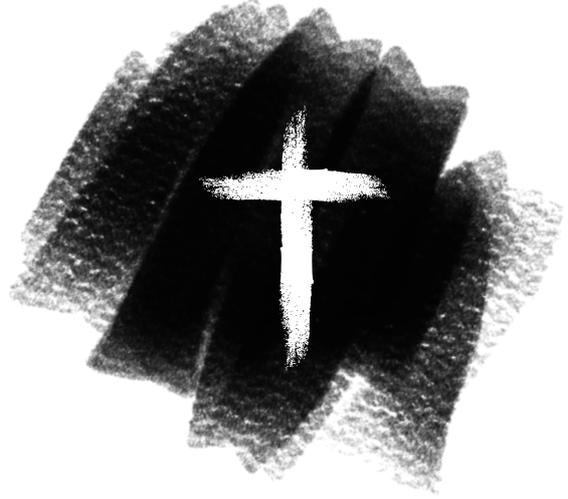
# Ash Wednesday

Translated in Konkani

## GOSPEL

Matthew 6: 2-6,

Jezun Apleam xisank Mhollem: “Chotrai dhorat! Tumcheo boreo kornnio mon'xam hujir, tankam teo dakhounche khatir, korum nakat; nam zalear, sorgar astea tumchea Bapaxim koslich mozuri tumkam mellchi na. Dekhun tum bhik ghaltain tednam, tuje mukhar turturi vazoi naka”.



## Reflection

Prachitacho Kall zaun asa kurpecho kall. Ami hea kallant ponnari zaun asanv. Amchea jivitachem ponn fokot Jezuchea pavlanim zolounk proitn kortanv. Hea somayar ho kall amkam upas, magnnem ani daan diunk avhan dita.

Hea kornnea vorvim, mog, bhogsannem, familint shant-somadhanachi vatt dorun, Deva ani monxam modlo sombond ghott dovoriam. Amchea jivitant ontoskarnncher nodor ghalun, jivitachi novsornni korunk ho ek soeg amkam soglleank dila.

Joel Provadi amkam ulo dita oxem mhonnon, “Sorvespor Devaxim porot ye, kiteak tho mogall ani kakklutchar, sosnnik ani doien bhorlolo”. Xubhvortomanant, Jezu aplea xisank xikoita ho upas koso zauncho to.

Aiz govracho bhudvar suru zal'lo kall amkam paskachea aitaraxevottak pavoita. Punn hea 40 disachea ponna vellar amchem patki jivit bodhlunk odik gorjechem. Na thor he ponn xevottak pavounk xokona.

# First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7

Psalm 50: 3-6, 12-14, 17

Romans 5: 12-19

Matthew 4: 1-11

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 50: 3-6, 12-14, 17

**R. Be merciful, O Lord,  
for we have sinned**

Have mercy on me, God,  
in your kindness.

In your compassion blot out my offence.  
O wash me more and more from my  
guilt and cleanse me from my sin. **R.**

My offences truly I know them;  
my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned:  
what is evil in your sight I have done. **R.**

A pure heart create for me, O God,  
put a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from  
your presence,  
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R.**

Give me again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.  
O Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth shall declare your praise. **R.**

## GOSPEL

Matthew 4: 1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:

Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.



## Reflection

It is interesting that the readings for the First Sunday of the Lenten season – a time characterised by fasting – share a focus on eating. Let us consider the following quotations:

Genesis 2:9 – The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

Matthew 4:2 – Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.’ But he replied, ‘Scripture says, “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”.’

The tree in the garden was both ‘enticing to look at and good to eat’. In other words it was attractive to the senses. That God had warned Adam and Eve not to eat it did not make it any less attractive, and the temptation by the serpent was enough to persuade Eve to give in to her desire. It did not take much to convince Adam to do the same!

On the other hand, Jesus, tempted by the devil to change the stones into bread, does not simply see something that is ‘enticing to look at and good to eat’ but takes note of the words of Scripture before he acts. Food, of itself, is something good and necessary for life, but can also be an obstacle to living a life in right relationship with God. Our spirit as well as our body needs nourishment, and its best nourishment is the very word of God.

Our Lenten journey through these forty days invites us to address our struggles and renew our commitment to live more closely the way of life that Christ taught us. Jesus’ own experience of temptation teaches us that no matter where we find ourselves, God’s Spirit is there with us, supporting us, encouraging us.

Giving up things for Lent can take on a richer meaning when we actually ‘give up’ things that restrain us from fully living out our Baptismal promise. We could resolve to do an inner self-check, asking ourselves if anything in our lives can be changed so that we might live gospel values more fully.

Then we can look forward to Easter Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection, by which he conquered sin and death, and provided us with hope for eternal life and gave us the ultimate reason for faith and for peace in our lives.



## Invitation to prayer

Gospel values encourage me to treat others with love. Lenten renewal leads me to reflect on my relationship with others. What aspects of these relationships would I like to change, renew, reinforce or confirm?

Baptism is often described as 'dying and rising with Christ'. If I could talk to Jesus about the meaning of Easter and Resurrection, what would I tell him about the impact of his life and values upon me and what I intend to do with the time I have left in my life?

## Prayer for the week

*We do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*

# Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4

Psalm 32: 4-5, 18-20, 22

Timothy 1: 8-10

Matthew 17: 1-9

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32:4-5, 18-20, 22

**R. Lord, let your mercy be on us,  
as we place our trust in you.**

The word of the Lord is faithful  
and all his works to be trusted.  
The Lord loves justice and right  
and fills the earth with his love. **R.**

The Lord looks on those who revere him,  
on those who hope in his love,  
to rescue their souls from death,  
to keep them alive in famine. **R.**

Our soul is waiting for the Lord.  
The Lord is our help and our shield.  
May your love be upon us, O Lord,  
as we place all our hope in you. **R.**

## GOSPEL

Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light.

Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus.

'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'

He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said,

'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him'.

When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them.

'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.'

And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order:

'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'



## Reflection

Imagine being amongst the disciples Peter, James and John and living that glorious and intimate mountaintop experience with Jesus. Being in the presence of Jesus and seeing him transfigured before your very own eyes, tangibly experiencing just how great God's love is for you. Perhaps you too have had a mountaintop experience, an intimate and intense encounter with Jesus that lights a fire in you and spurs you on. How glorious are these mountaintop experiences!

The only thing about being on top of a mountain, however, is that eventually you must come back down. Returning to the reality of life and all the situations, people, challenges, or monotony that it may entail.

Just like the disciples, our lives are filled with highs, lows and everywhere in between. The good news is that we're not alone. Jesus calls us to stand up, to not be afraid and is there ready to meet us wherever we are, whether it's on the mountaintop or journeying back on flat ground.



"This is my Son,  
the Beloved; he  
enjoys my favour.  
Listen to him."

## Invitation to prayer

Reflect on a mountaintop experience you have had with Jesus. How has this experience impacted you?

Reflect on a time when you have come down from a mountaintop experience. How did you feel God's presence?

## Prayer for the week

*Stand up, do not be afraid*

# Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17: 3-7

Psalm 94: 1-2, 6-9

Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8

John 4: 5-42

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 94: 1-2, 6-9

**R. If today you hear his voice,  
harden not your hearts.**

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;  
hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks,  
with songs let us hail the Lord. **R.**

Come in; let us bow and bend low;  
let us kneel before the God who made us  
for he is our God and we  
the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand. **R.**

O that today you would listen  
to his voice!

'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test;  
when they tried me,  
though they saw my work.' **R.**

## GOSPEL

John 4: 5-42

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' - Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:

'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied:

'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.'

Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said:

"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come - in fact it is here already - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshiper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah - that is, Christ - is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything,' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.'

At this point his disciples returned, and were surprised to find him speaking to a woman, though none of them asked, 'What do you want from her?' or, 'Why are you talking to her?' The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people, 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?' This brought people out of the town and they started walking towards him.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, do have something to eat;' but he said, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples asked one another, 'Has someone been bringing him food?' But Jesus said:

'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work. Have you not got a saying: Four months and then the harvest? Well, I tell you: Look around you, look at the fields; already they are white, ready for harvest! Already the reaper is being paid his wages, already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life, and thus sower and

reaper rejoice together. For here the proverb holds good: one sows, another reaps; I sent you to reap a harvest you had not worked for. Others worked for it; and you have come into the rewards of their trouble.'

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony, when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done,' so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

*"worship  
in spirit  
& truth"*



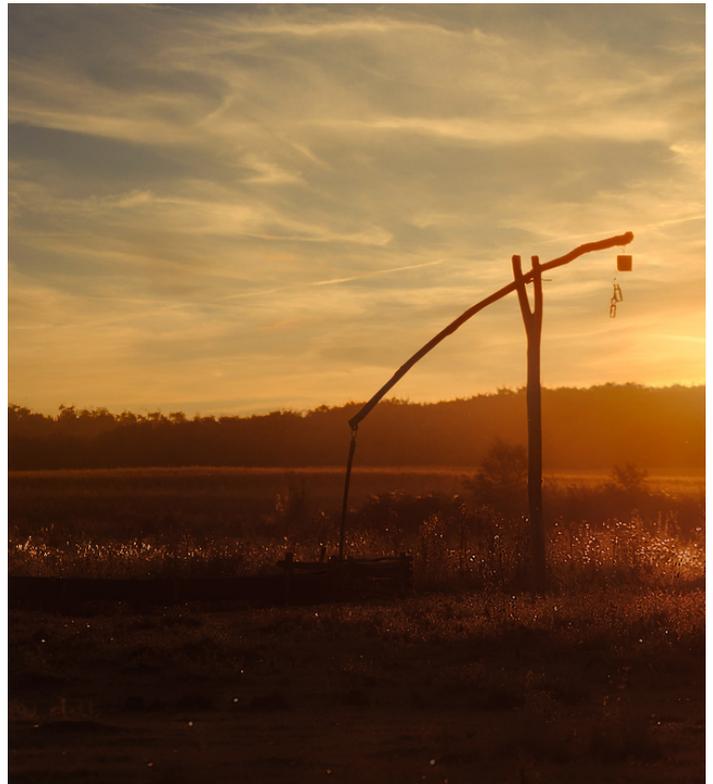
## Reflection

Why would Jesus opt to sit in the sun at the well with no water and no means to obtain it? Why would his disciples agree to leave him there as they go to find food? Have they learnt to trust Jesus, who “must be about My Father’s business” (Luke 2:49), believing in time, all will be revealed?

Jesus waited for this woman at the well. He asked her for a drink of water; something he couldn’t supply for himself. He then offered her living water; water that she could not access herself. Jesus revealed himself to her – the truth. The Samaritan woman was transformed and became a seeker of the truth.

As the disciples returned, the woman hurried to tell the townspeople what she had experienced. This woman who was excluded from the community, was now being received and listened to!

Her inner transformation allowed her to be accepted and believed by her community. God’s plan for this woman was greater than her own transformation. She became an instrument in God’s greater plan to draw the people closer to God. God works in communion with humanity and creation.



## Invitation to prayer

Can I be open to listen to God and God’s plan for me? What would enable this to happen?

When has God spoken to me through others or through creation? How did I react?

What relationships could I focus on at this time of Lent to be in communion with God and God’s greater plan?

## Prayer for the week

*Bring me to stillness Lord, so I may hear your voice.*

# Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13

Psalms 22

Ephesians 5: 8-14

John 9: 1-41

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 22

**R. The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.**

The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit. **R.**

He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook  
and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort. **R.**

You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing. **R.**

Surely goodness and kindness shall  
follow me all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
for ever and ever. **R.**

## GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered, 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'

'As long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man. However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.'

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.'

The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he

open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from.' The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

Jesus said:

'It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight turn blind.'

Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, surely?' Jesus replied: 'Blind? If you were, you would not be guilty, but since you say, "We see", your guilt remains.'



## Reflection

St Augustine once said, ‘You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.’ How these powerful words of Augustine resonated in my heart when I read them! They tell me so much about my being, my faith journey, my identity as a Christian on a pilgrimage on earth, the meaning and purpose of life, joy and peace. Like the blind man whose eyes were opened by Jesus, we too encounter a compassion that is very tender and totally unconditional when we seek the face of the Lord.

In fact, today’s readings are all about seeing correctly. The prophet Samuel needed the vision of God rather than human sight when choosing a king from among Jesse’s sons. In the gospel, not only were the blind man’s physical eyes opened but his ‘spiritual’ eyes were able to see and experience Jesus’ unfailing love and power. What a transformation took place! Now the man had the courage to face up to the Pharisees and say without hesitation, ‘I only know that I was blind and now I can see.’

The world we live in is full of crises such as wars, drought, famine, global warming and climate change, heading towards catastrophic finality. If we turn towards the face of Christ the King of the universe and seek his mercy, he will surely answer.

God’s faithful ones have always been exhorted to ‘seek his face always’ (Ps. 105:4). It is the Lord’s own desire to be our constant companion in every experience. He wants us to know him through and through. If we draw closer to him, he will draw closer to us. Let us turn to God, to yearn to be in relationship with him and to be in his presence; in that way we will find the help and strength that we need and our hearts will find the eternal rest they seek.

## Invitation to prayer

What is the ‘blindness’ that I am suffering from? What am I doing about it during this Lenten period?

God pronounced every part of creation as good. How have we become so disconnected from the created world? What can I do to see more clearly the beauty of all things and care for them?

The blind man of the Gospel was both poor and vulnerable. How can I show and share the love of Christ with such people in our midst?

## Prayer for the week

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord.  
Whoever follows me will have the light of life.*

# Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37: 12-14

Psalm 129

Romans 8: 8-11

John 11: 1-45

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22

**R. With the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption.**

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.**

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you. **R.**

My soul is waiting for the Lord,  
I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord  
more than watchman for daybreak. **R.**

Because with the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption,  
Israel indeed he will redeem  
from all its iniquity. **R.**

## GOSPEL

John 11: 1-45

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with the 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 as 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 round 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.

*"I am the  
resurrection  
and the life"*



## Reflection

Today's readings are all about being truly alive. Ezekiel reveals that it is the Spirit of God that gives life to our bodies. God has brought the Chosen People back from death with the promise: 'I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live...'

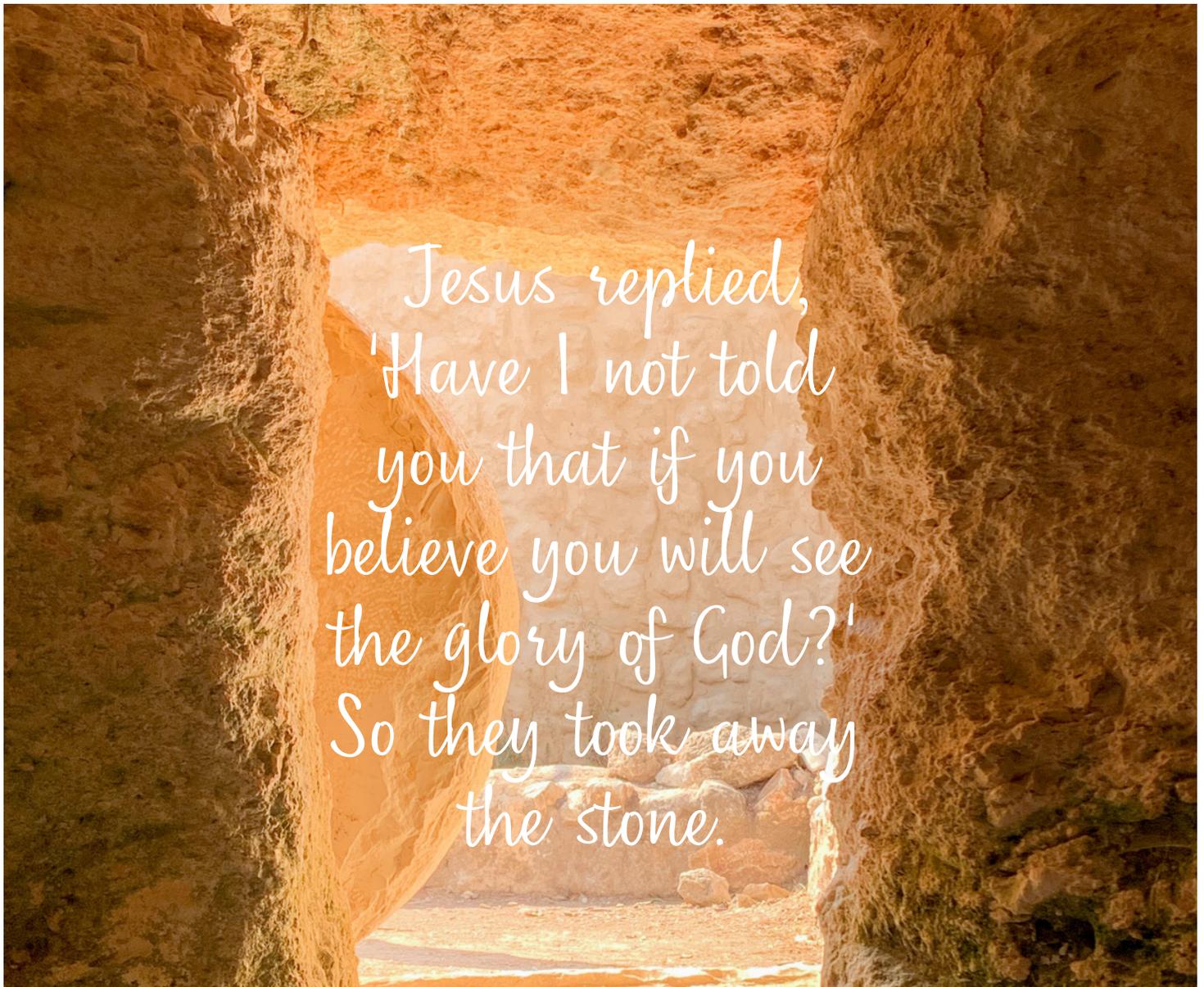
This is repeated in the Second Reading where Paul reminds us that it is Christ who has brought us back from the death of sin through his resurrection and enabled us to have life itself because of his Spirit living in us.

In the Gospel we have the physical evidence of this fact. Jesus truly is 'the resurrection and the life.' He brings Lazarus back to life from bodily death but through this gives a glimpse of the eternal life that comes through faith in him. To be alive in Christ is to experience the fullness of redemption, the fullness of God's love and mercy for us.

Mary, Martha and Lazarus are dear friends of Jesus. When the sisters send the message of their brother's illness to Jesus, they describe him as 'The man you love.'

It is interesting to reflect on the different reactions of Martha and Mary to Jesus when he finally arrives in Bethany: Martha runs to meet him, while Mary remains in the house. However, both greet him with the same words: 'Lord, if you were here my brother would not have died.' Martha goes on to affirm her faith in Jesus and her confidence that even at this late stage all is not lost. Jesus responds with one of the marvellous statements of the Gospels, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, even though they die will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.'

Mary, on the other hand, throws herself in tears at Jesus' feet. His response is to weep with her, and to ask, 'Where have you put him?' Both women have complete faith in Jesus, but they respond differently. And his response matches theirs. How comforting to know that Our Lord is always in solidarity with us and is able to understand the many ways that we experience life.



Jesus replied,  
'Have I not told  
you that if you  
believe you will see  
the glory of God?'  
So they took away  
the stone.

## Invitation to prayer

In times of crisis do I respond with my head or my heart? How does Jesus reveal himself to me at these times?

It is Baptism that joins us with Christ and begins our journey with him to eternal life. Do I take the wonder of baptism for granted? How can I best prepare for the renewal of Baptismal promises at Easter?

Today's Gospel can be taken as a sign-post of Jesus' own death and resurrection. The cross is a reality but death is not the final destination. Lord, increase my faith in you, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

## Prayer for the week

*With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption*

# Fifth Sunday of Lent

Translated in Spanish

## Escritura

**“Yo soy la Resurrección y la vida. El que cree en mí, aunque haya muerto, vivirá”.**

**San Juan 11:25-26**

Las lecturas de hoy nos hablan del verdadero significado de estar vivos. Ezequiel nos revela que es el Espíritu de Dios el que da vida a nuestros cuerpos. Dios ha resucitado al pueblo elegido con la promesa: "Pondré mi espíritu en vosotros y viviréis...".

En la segunda lectura, San Pablo nos recuerda que es Cristo quien nos ha sacado de la muerte del pecado mediante su resurrección, y nos ha permitido tener la vida misma, gracias a su Espíritu que vive en nosotros.

El Evangelio nos proporciona evidencia de estas palabras. Jesús es verdaderamente "la resurrección y la vida". Jesús resucita a Lázaro de la muerte corporal, sin embargo, no podemos perder de vista que esta es una prefigura de la vida eterna que viene a través de la fe en Él.

Estar vivo en Cristo es experimentar la plenitud de la redención, la plenitud del amor y la misericordia de Dios por nosotros.



## Reflexión

María, Marta y Lázaro son amigos queridos de Jesús. Cuando María y Martha envían a Jesús el mensaje de la enfermedad de Lázaro, lo describen como "El hombre que amas está enfermo".

Es interesante reflexionar sobre las diferentes reacciones de Marta y María ante Jesús cuando éste llega por fin a Betania:

Marta corre a su encuentro, mientras que María se queda en casa. Sin embargo, ambas mujeres lo saludan con las mismas palabras: "Señor, si hubieras estado aquí, mi hermano no habría muerto". Marta afirma su fe en Jesús y su confianza en que, incluso a estas alturas, no todo está perdido. Jesús responde con una de las afirmaciones más maravillosas de los Evangelios: "Yo soy la resurrección y la vida. Quien crea en mí, aunque muera vivirá, y quien viva y crea en mí no morirá jamás".

María, por su parte, se arroja llorando a los pies de Jesús. Él llora con ella y le pregunta: "¿Dónde lo has puesto?"

Ambas mujeres tienen plena fe en Jesús, pero responden de manera diferente. Y la respuesta de Jesús es personal, tanto para María como para Marta, Jesús sale a su encuentro ahí donde cada una se encuentra. Qué reconfortante es saber que Nuestro Señor siempre es solidario con nosotros y es capaz de comprender las muchas maneras en que experimentamos la vida.

## Invitación a la oración

En tiempos de crisis, ¿respondo con la cabeza o con el corazón? Cómo se me revela Jesús durante esos momentos?

El Bautismo nos une a Cristo y con él iniciamos nuestro camino hacia la vida eterna. ¿Doy por sentado la maravilla del bautismo? ¿Qué puedo hacer para prepararme mejor para la renovación de las promesas bautismales en Pascua?

El Evangelio de hoy puede interpretarse como una profecía/prefigura de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús. A pesar de que la cruz es una realidad no perdamos de vista que después de ella nos espera la resurrección. Señor tu eres el camino, la verdad y la vida aumenta mi fe en ti.

## Súplica de la semana

*Con el Señor hay misericordia y plenitud de la redención.*

# Lenten Prayer

Merciful and loving God,  
You invite us to embark on this Lenten journey to Easter with you.

Let your word bless and nourish each Lenten day,  
so that your light will brighten our darkness  
and allow us to focus on generosity and kindness to others  
rather than selfishness and concern for ourselves.

Give us hearts that are hungry to take up the call of our baptism,  
to serve you and those who need what we have to give.

Let us fast not only in body but in spirit  
so that we remember always that our life depends not on us but on you.

It was you who formed us in our mother's womb,  
you who made us in your own image and likeness,  
you who have known us in the depths of our dreams  
and the darkness of our shame,  
and still you love us with an unwavering and unconditional love.

May this Lenten journey be a time of growth and healing  
as we draw closer to you,  
so that when Easter arrives we will truly share in the joy of resurrection  
and sing with one voice: "Alleluia, Christ is risen indeed!"

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Contributors: Fr. Lancy D'Silva CSC | Hindmarsh / Findon Parish

Ian Cameron | Emmaus Parish

Kevin Liston | Hallett Cove Parish

Juliana Kittel | Catholic Office for Youth & Young Adults

Pauline Connell | Pastoral Services Team, Archdiocese of Adelaide

Dcn. Alfred Donat | Cathedral Parish

Linda Torres |

Dr. Jenny O'Brien | Office for Worship, Archdiocese of Adelaide

Design & Editor: Lauren Bierer | Office for Worship, Archdiocese of Adelaide

Copyright: Scripture Readings are taken from the Jerusalem Bible © 1966, 1967, 1968

Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Co. Inc.

Used by permission of the publishers. All rights reserved.

English translation of the Psalm Responses are taken from the Lectionary  
for Mass © 1981, International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL).

All rights reserved. Psalm verses are taken from The Psalms: A New  
Translation ©1963, The Grail (England), published by Collins

Printing: Bowden Print Group, Welland SA