

SUNDAY READINGS

READ AT HOME

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Year B

17 March 2024



Collect

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Readings and Commentaries

On two momentous occasions reported in all three synoptic gospels – Jesus' baptism and his transfiguration – a voice speaks from heaven, declaring that Jesus is God's Beloved Son. John offers no account of either event. Instead, he records the Baptist's testimony that the Spirit came down like a dove and rested on Jesus, "the Chosen One of God" (1:32-34). In place of a fleeting display of glory on the mount of transfiguration, the whole of John's gospel is shot through with divine glory. Thus, the one time a heavenly voice is heard, it speaks of glory. Jesus immediately presents his coming death as a triumph over death. Raised on high, he will draw all people into the glorious love he shares with the Father.

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

31:31–34

See, the days are coming - it is the Lord who speaks - when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive - it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest - it is the Lord who speaks - since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

First Reading

Our accompaniment of Israel through its ancient history concludes fittingly with the promise of a new bond between God and the Chosen People. The prophet Jeremiah delivers an oracle of hope and love to a demoralised nation. Struggling to cope with the Babylonian conquest and the loss of all that signified God's choice of them – the temple, the land, the monarchy – the people are at a low ebb. God offers to forge a new relationship with them, attested not by outward signs but by what is in their hearts.

God's way for them – the Law – will be written in everyone's heart. It's a revolutionary gift, radically inclusive, independent of power, status, wealth, merit and learning, for "they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks." The past is swept away by forgiveness and a new era begins.

This is a core text in both Testaments. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel echo Jeremiah in bearing the promise of a new and everlasting covenant. The author of the letter to the Hebrews cites the passage in its entirety (8:8-12) and repeats part of it later (10:16-17). Mark (10:25) and Paul (1 Cor 11: 25) allude to it in their accounts of the Last Supper.

Since this message of consolation is announced by the voice of God, it calls for proclamation that is both strong and sympathetic. From start to finish it is a word of encouragement, expressing generous and faithful love. This is how the assembly should hear it. The NRSV renders the text inclusively.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 50:3–4, 12–15

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

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.**

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,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you. **R.**

Responsorial Psalm

In counterpoint to Jeremiah's oracle of divine forgiveness for the whole people, Psalm 50/51 is almost entirely an individual's confession of sin and plea for forgiveness. The six other psalms known as "penitential" also focus on the individual. The most well-known of them are today's psalm and Psalm 129/130, "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord."

Psalm 50/51 shifts backwards and forwards between consciousness of personal guilt and recognition of God's goodness. In the process there's a twofold confession – an explicit confession of sin and an implicit confession of faith. The psalmist puts faith in God's kindness and compassion and also in God's desire to impart a spirit of joy. This deep trust, along with the mention of teaching God's ways, aligns the psalm with the reading from Jeremiah.

The responsorial psalm has been compiled from the opening verse of Psalm 50/51 plus a pair of verses from mid-way through. The response comes from the latter in a slightly modified form. The nature of the psalm calls for a delivery that is prayerful, sincere and heartfelt. This will encourage the assembly to make the response a heartfelt plea of their own.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews 5:7–9

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 12:20–33

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.
I tell you, most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain;
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.
Anyone who loves his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for the eternal life.
If a man serves me, he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.
Now my soul is troubled.
What shall I say:
Father, save me from this hour?
But it was for this very reason
that I have come to this hour.
Father, glorify your name!'

A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.'

People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.'

'Now sentence is being passed on this world;
now the prince of this world is to be overthrown.
And when I am lifted up from the earth,
I shall draw all men to myself.'

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

Second Reading

No doubt these few verses from the letter to the Hebrews will bring Jesus' agonised prayer in the garden of Gethsemane to mind. However, the opening words – "During his life on earth" – suggests a pattern of prayer rather than a single occasion. The fact that Jesus quotes the psalms on several occasions, most notably on the cross, suggests he was in the habit of praying the psalms. If so, he would have cried out "aloud and with silent tears" often enough.

The author is intent on stressing Jesus' solidarity with us. It's a central theme of his letter. The humanity that Jesus shares unreservedly with us makes him our compassionate high priest. Like us, he too had to face the threatening power of death. The author adopts the prevailing view of his time, that suffering plays an important role in shaping character (he has more to say on this later, in 12:5-13). When he writes that Jesus' "prayer was heard," we know that Jesus was indeed not saved "from death" but "out of death."

This short text is charged with both feeling and faith. It invites readers to proclaim it with due seriousness and sensitivity. They will have served the assembly well if they fulfil the author's wish that his audience whole-heartedly identify with Jesus, their divine-human saviour.

Gospel

Like the reading from Hebrews, this gospel passage seems to allude to Jesus' agony in the garden, reported by the synoptics but not by John. If so, John certainly presents the event very differently. It takes place publicly in Jerusalem, not secretly in a garden outside the city. Along with the crowd, the key players are Greeks, not Galileans. The disciples who approach Jesus are Philip and Andrew, not the favoured three of the synoptics, Peter, James and John. The episode precedes, rather than follows, his farewell meal. And characteristically, Jesus is in command in spite of his admission that "my soul is troubled."

The reading has numerous associations with other New Testament texts, but two powerful images in particular linger in the mind. The first is that of the grain of wheat that by dying yields a rich harvest. The second is that of Jesus being lifted up from the earth and drawing all humankind to himself. Each invites prolonged contemplation.

The passage alternates between narrative and discourse, with some dialogue for good measure. Each of these elements should be clearly distinguished in the proclamation. The successive declarations of Jesus call for a more authoritative and measured delivery. His sayings are concentrated with meaning and should not be rushed. All in all, this gospel serves as an overture that introduces the themes of the drama that is about to unfold.

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR B

FIRST READING (NRSV)

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah 31:31–34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to bring them out of the land of Egypt—
a covenant that they broke,
though I was their husband,
says the Lord.

But this is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,
says the Lord:
I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts;
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
No longer shall they teach one another,
or say to each other; "Know the Lord,"
for they shall all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord;
for I will forgive their iniquity,
and remember their sin no more.

SECOND READING (NRSV)

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews 5:7–9

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears,
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard because of his reverent submission.
Although he was a Son,
he learned obedience through what he suffered;
and having been made perfect,
he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

GOSPEL (NRSV)

A reading from the holy gospel according to John 12:20–30

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.
They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee,
and said to him,
"Sir, we wish to see Jesus."
Philip went and told Andrew;
then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.
Jesus answered them,
"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
Very truly, I tell you,
unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Those who love their life lose it,
and those who hate their life in this world
will keep it for eternal life.
"Whoever serves me must follow me,
and where I am, there will my servant be also.
Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.
"Now my soul is troubled.
And what should I say— 'Father, save me from this hour'?
No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.
Father, glorify your name."
Then a voice came from heaven,
"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."
The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder.
Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."
Jesus answered,
"This voice has come for your sake, not for mine.
Now is the judgment of this world;
now the ruler of this world will be driven out.
And I, when I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all people to myself."
Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Concluding Prayer

Prayer over the People (Fifth Sunday of Lent)

Bless, O Lord, your people,
who long for the gift of your mercy,
and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire
they may receive by your generous gift.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.
Amen.

(Adapted from the Prayer over the People for the Fifth Sunday of Lent, Roman Missal p. 283.)

SUNDAY READINGS

READ AT HOME

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Year A Readings - Optional

17 March 2024

Since the Year A gospels for the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent are of major importance in regard to Christian initiation, the readings of Year A can be used every year on these three Sundays. The Year A readings are particularly appropriate where there are Elect (Catechumens).

Collect

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Readings and Commentaries

Two imperious commands bring the story of Lazarus to a dramatic climax. The first is Jesus' charge to his dead friend, "Lazarus, here! Come out!" The second is his order to the on-lookers, "Unbind him, let him go free." The first testifies to Jesus' power over life and death, the second implicates us in the service of others' freedom. Each gives food for thought.

The first invites us to muse on how much we dwell in the realm of life and how much in the realm of death. Paul wrestles with this question in the early chapters of his letter to the Romans. Long before that, Moses put it to the people in these words: "I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then . . ." (Dt 30:19). That's what Lent is all about, choosing life.

Paul has something else to say in a passage from Romans often used at funerals: "The life and death of each of us has its influence on others" (14:7). When we choose life and embrace our freedom, we help set others free from the unseen web of death in which they are entangled. Life and freedom are Jesus' gift to those who want them enough.

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

37:12–14

The Lord says this: I am going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

First Reading

It's widely understood these days that the Paschal Vigil lies at the heart of the liturgical year, but its counterpart – the Vigil of Pentecost – is more like a best-kept secret. The lectionary offers a number of readings that can be used for an extended liturgy of the word on the eve of Pentecost. One of those readings is the full account of Ezekiel's vision that we only hear the conclusion of today.

Readers who check out the story in full (37:1-14) will be rewarded. In his vision Ezekiel sees a valley full of dead bones. Gradually, step by step, the bones are covered with sinew, flesh and skin and then brought to life by the breath of God. It's a powerful oracle of encouragement for the demoralised exiles of Israel who feel they are as good as dead. It promises them new life, return to their homeland, and fresh adoption as God's people.

Today's reading comprises the final three verses of the vision. Without the dramatic build-up, their impact is diminished but they still convey a strong message of hope. Even in this short text there is a degree of repetition. This story-telling device serves to reinforce the message and shouldn't be hurried through. The reading is in the form of a solemn pronouncement by the Lord. It should be delivered with strength and seriousness.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 129

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 ear 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.
(Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.) **R.**

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

Responsorial Psalm

After the communal breadth of Ezekiel's vision, there's a striking shift to the individual in Psalm 129/130, the whole of which serves as the responsorial psalm. The change of focus isn't immediately obvious, as the response is wide in scope. Verses one and three, however, are the prayerful cry of an individual in great distress. Verses two and four embrace the community again, as the personal experience of deliverance gives the psalmist grounds for assuring the whole people of mercy and redemption.

The image of the watchman waiting for the dawn to break could imply that the psalmist has spent the whole night in a vigil of prayer. As already noted, there is a marked shift in tone in the course of the psalm. It begins in anguish but moves progressively towards the confident trust of the final verse.

Good readers will be sure not to conflate the two lines of the response into a single flat sentence. In praying the verses they will take care to communicate the psalm's full emotional range to the assembly. They will also be mindful of the extra length of the third verse.

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans**

8:8–11

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

**A reading from the holy Gospel
according to 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?'

Second Reading

Though this passage from Romans begins on a negative note (the unspiritual can "never be pleasing to God"), the message overall is decidedly positive. The Spirit of God, Paul writes, has "made his home in you." Through the Spirit believers are justified and belong to Christ. In the final days, the Spirit living in them will give life to their "mortal bodies."

This affirmative view of Spirit and life is set against the "unspiritual" which means sin and death. Paul is not setting up a dichotomy between flesh and spirit, as if bodily life itself was an evil. He's contrasting life under the sway of sin with life governed by the Spirit. As is so often the case, Paul's thought doesn't run in a simple linear direction. It heads off on detours and sometimes reverses direction.

The NRSV lectionary helpfully sets the reading out in short lines. It would do readers no harm to do this exercise for themselves – even to re-order the units – so as to be clear about the key points Paul is making and how they inter-relate. This is especially the case with the second half of the reading which is a lengthy complex sentence in two parts. Readers must still proclaim the text as Paul wrote it, but if they have grasped its logic they have a better chance of illuminating it for the assembly.

Gospel

Apart from the intimacy of Jesus' farewell discourse with his disciples, the story of the raising of Lazarus is the most deeply personal in John's gospel. We are told that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. He calls Lazarus his friend, and when he sees the tears of Mary and others, he feels great distress, sighs deeply, and weeps.

Yet for all this, John is not aiming to arouse our sympathy with a human-interest story. He has a much more serious purpose, that of shedding light on Jesus' true identity and summoning his readers to the fullness of faith. John gives an early clue to this in Jesus' decision not to go immediately to Bethany; what is at the forefront of Jesus' mind is the glory of God, not human consolation. John goes on, in verses we do not hear today, to report that the raising of Lazarus provoked the plot to kill Jesus. Ultimately, as the gospel as a whole testifies, the glory of God is made manifest in the death of Jesus.

The length of this story (the longest single narrative in John apart from the passion) presents one challenge, but another is the interweaving of its emotional and theological threads. Ministers of the gospel have to hold in balance its profound poignancy and its Christological testimony. As has been spelt out in the commentaries on the gospel stories of the past two Sundays, a choice has to be made between the full or the shortened version, as well as about the manner of proclamation. The guiding principle is what will be of most benefit for the assembly.

'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.

[Short Form: omit text in brackets.]

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – OPTIONAL YEAR A

FIRST READING (NRSV)

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel 37:12–14

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.
And you shall know that I am the Lord,
when I open your graves,
and bring you up from your graves, O my people.
"I 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.

SECOND READING (NRSV)

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans 8:8–11

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit,
since the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.
But if Christ is in you,
though the body is dead because of sin,
the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead
dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead
will give life to your mortal bodies also
through his Spirit that dwells in you.

GOSPEL (NRSV)

A reading from the holy gospel according to John 11:1–45

[Now a certain man, Lazarus, was ill.
He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume
and wiped his feet with her hair;
her brother Lazarus was ill.
So] the sisters of Lazarus sent a message to Jesus,
"Lord, he whom you love is ill."
But when Jesus heard this, 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."
Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus,
after having heard that Lazarus was ill,
he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.
Then after this Jesus said to the disciples,
"Let us go to Judea again."

[The disciples said to him,
"Rabbi, the people there were just now trying to stone you,
and are you going there again?"
Jesus 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.
But those who walk at night stumble,
because the light is not in them."
After saying this, he told them,
"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep,
but I am going there to awaken him."
The disciples said to him,
"Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right."
Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death,
but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep.
Then Jesus told them plainly,
"Lazarus is dead.
For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.
But let us go to him."
Thomas, who was called the Twin,
said to his fellow disciples,
"Let us also go, that we may die with him."]
When Jesus arrived,
he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.
[Now Bethany was near Jerusalem,
some two miles away,
and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary
to console them about their brother.]
When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him,
while Mary stayed at home.
Martha said to Jesus,
"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."
Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."
Martha said to him,
"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."
Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me,
even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.
Do you believe this?"
She said to him,
"Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah,
the Son of God, the one coming into the world."
[When 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."
And when Mary heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.
Now Jesus had not yet come to the village,
but was still at the place where Martha had met him.
The 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.
When 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."
When Jesus saw her weeping,
and the Jews who came with her also weeping,]
he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.
Jesus said, "Where have you laid him?"
They said to him, "Lord, come and see."
Jesus began to weep.
So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

But some of them said,
"Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man
have kept this man from dying?"
Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb.
It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.
Jesus 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 four days."
Jesus said to her,
"Did I not tell you that if you believed,
you would see the glory of God?"
So they took away the stone.
And Jesus looked upward and said,
"Father, I thank you for having heard me.
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."
When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice,
"Lazarus, come out!"
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."
Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary
and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

[Short Form: omit text in brackets.]

Concluding Prayer

Prayer over the People (Fifth Sunday of Lent)

Bless, O Lord, your people,
who long for the gift of your mercy,
and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire
they may receive by your generous gift.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.
Amen.

(Adapted from the Prayer over the People for the Fifth Sunday of Lent, Roman Missal p. 283.)