

Suggested Opening Song: Eye Has Not Seen, #221

As we approach Holy Week and the final days of Lent, we hear the well-known story of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, whom Jesus raises from the dead. John's account of this miracle is one of the most dramatic accounts in any of the Gospels, save Jesus' own passion, death, and resurrection. We can only imagine the emotions coursing through Martha and Mary and their loved ones when Jesus stands at the tomb and dramatically cries: "Lazarus, come out!" On this final scrutiny Sunday, may we hear Jesus calling out to us as well, to come out of our tombs of sin and death and embrace new life in the resurrection.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 144

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

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, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 136

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

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

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!
Let your ears be attentive / to my voice in supplication. **R/.**

If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, / Lord, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness, / that you may be revered. **R/.**

I trust in the Lord; / my soul trusts in his work.
More than sentinels wait for the dawn, / let Israel wait for the Lord. **R/.**

For with the Lord is kindness / and with him is plenteous redemption;
and he will redeem Israel / from all their iniquities. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Romans 8:8-11

Brothers and sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

John 11:1-45

Glory to you, O Lord

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So

then Jesus said to them clearly, “Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him.” So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go to die with him.”

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise.” Martha said to him, “I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, “The teacher is here and is asking for you.” As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell 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 had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Sir, come and see.” And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him.” But some of the, said, “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that his man would not have died?”

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him, “Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.” And when he had said this, He cried out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- Often Jesus requires that those he heals participate in some way in their recovery. Last week, we heard Jesus heal the blind man by applying clay to his eyes. But then he instructed the man, still sightless, to make it to the Pool of Siloam to wash his eyes. Perhaps onlookers were able to guide him there. Today, Lazarus, tied hand and foot with burial bands after being dead for four days, is ordered to walk out of the tomb. He then orders onlookers to untie Lazarus. These miracles are not passive operations. Today, when we encounter those who are blind out of ignorance or self-centeredness, or when we recognize those who are entombed by addiction or hardship, Jesus orders us to help free them from the bands that bind them.
- The passage we heard ends on the triumphant line that many people began to believe in the Lord after seeing this miracle. But the very next line reveals a different reaction: “But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done” (John 11:46). Most people see a miracle and react with awe and wonder. But for some, a miracle simply upsets the status quo. They want the blind to stay blind and the dead to stay dead. Someone with the power over blindness and death threatens the little power they are allowed to have. They

fear “the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation” (John 11:48). Our land and our nation, yes, but also our positions of power. “So from that day on they planned to kill him” (John 11:53).

- Death is the subject of each of today’s readings. Ezekiel addresses the death of a great nation, its citizens in exile. Paul speaks of life “in the flesh,” a kind of spiritual death (Romans 8:8). Lazarus has been dead in the tomb for four days. In each case, God brings new life: raising those exiled from their graves and returning them to Israel, sending us the Spirit, who gives life to our mortal bodies, and bringing us forth from the tomb. Our collective sinfulness, our personal sins, and death itself have no power over God. We are called to “come out!” (John 11:43) from our tombs of sin and death and live in the new life of Christ.

Question of the Week

What sins are keeping me entombed, isolated from God’s love and from others? What can I do to free myself from my tomb?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We raise our voices in supplication to the Lord, trusting in the One who can raise the dead to new life.

- For the Church, that we may bear witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, breathing life into the tombs of sin and despair, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That leaders of wealthy nations may work to release poor countries from the bonds of crushing debt, which disproportionately burdens the poorest of the poor, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those suffering in the depths of injustice, poverty, or neglect, that God will be attentive to their cries, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those preparing for the Easter sacraments, as they die to their old ways and find new life in the light of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all those who grieve the loss of a loved one, that they may be consoled by the words Jesus proclaimed in the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, you promise us new life beyond the grave, beyond our sins, beyond the tombs that suffocate us. Afford us with a glimpse of your heavenly kingdom as you grant the prayers we make, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord’s Prayer: p. 180

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us, ☩ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: On Eagle's Wings, #276