

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Fifth Sunday of Lent

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday, alone or with family. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there if possible. As a family, choose the one who leads the prayer, and someone to do the readings.

Whoever leads the prayer can say:

From time immemorial God has promised, “O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” But this will not happen before Jesus weeps. He weeps in front of doubt: “You want to go back there?” He weeps in front of nihilism: “Could he not have done something?” He weeps in front of fatalism: “Lord, by now there will be a stench.” When Jesus calls Lazarus from his grave, he teaches us just how far we must go in trusting the power of his love for us. Although “dead because of sin, the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.” On this Fifth Sunday of Lent, we trust that the Lord calls to us, breaks down every barrier that stands between him and us, and calls us to share in his life.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:

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

HYMN

Choose an appropriate song.

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

The following are the readings of the 5th Sunday of Lent.

**A reading from
the Book of the Prophet 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.

—•PSALM 130•—

R (7) 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 word.
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**

**A reading from
the Letter of Saint Paul to the 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.

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;/ whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will never die.

**A reading from
the holy Gospel according to John**

11:1-45

[For the shorter form (11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45), omit the text in brackets.]

[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 (of Lazarus) 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 them said, “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this 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.

Allow for a few minutes of silence and meditation. In a family, the leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as: "Lord Jesus, we trust that you have given us your Spirit, and that he will give life to our mortal bodies. We believe in the power of your Resurrection, we believe we will see your glory. We know that the Father always hears you, and so we entrust ourselves entirely to you and to your holy Mother, who will never cease to draw us close to you."

M E D I T A T I O N O F T H E D A Y

Come Forth!

Where have you laid him? They lead him to the place.... The fate of the world is at stake as death and the Lord stand face to face. Jesus commands that the stone be rolled away. Martha reminds him of the four days that have passed since burial. *Have I not told you that if you believe you shall behold the glory of God?* She believes but does not comprehend. Jesus stands alone with all that he is, the only one intrinsically alive among so many mortals, hence also the only one who really knows what death means. He must break this dark power....

Turning to his Father, he praises him for the unheard-of power about to manifest itself; then he cries with a loud voice: *Lazarus, come forth!* With a loud voice—why? In Naim it had been so easy, and at the bedside of the little girl a quiet word had sufficed. Why then the cry and the huge gesture? We recall the same mighty cry from the cross between the last word and death (Lk 23:46). Both issued from the same heart, the same calling, and are one and the same act. Here though is not only the miracle of resuscitation from death; behind the visible event, deep in the last recesses of the spirit, rages a battle.... It is against the enemy of salvation that Jesus warns. Christ conquers death by conquering him who reigns in death: Satan.

And he does not vanquish by magic, nor by superior spiritual force, but simply by being what he is: invulnerable to the root and vital through and through. He is life itself, that life which is grounded in perfect love to the Father. This is Jesus' strength. The cry was a surge of that vitality in an all-overpowering thrust of love.

SERVANT OF GOD ROMANO GUARDINI

Monsignor Guardini († 1968) was born in Italy and became a renowned liturgist and professor of philosophy and theology in Germany.

INTERCESSIONS

The leader can begin with these words:

God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life, and life to the full. Trusting in the Father, we pray:

R Lord, hear our prayer!

For the Church, especially those who have been preparing to enter the Church this Easter, that they will remain faithful to Christ all the days of their life. Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For all those who hold public office: that they may be given wisdom, prudence, and courage in this difficult time. Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For all healthcare providers, that the Lord will protect them and reward their generosity. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For the poor, the sick, the hungry, the unemployed, and those who are most at risk from the virus: that God may shower his love and mercy upon them. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For all who are close to death and for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed: that they will see the glory of God. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For ourselves and our families, that the Lord will increase our faith and hope in him and his eternal goodness. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

Personal intentions

Our Father....

An Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

To conclude the celebration, you can sing one of the following songs, or another suitable one. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.



Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you do we cry,
poor banished children of Eve.
To you do we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, O most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us,
and after this our exile
show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

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V/ Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
R That we may be made worthy
of the promises of Christ.

Or:

*S*alve, Regína, Máter misericórdiæ
Víta, dulcédo, et spes nóstra, sálve.
Ad te clamámus, éxules, filii Hérvæ.
Ad te suspirámus, geméntes et flentes
in hac lacrimárum vâlle.
Eia ergo, Advocáta nóstra,
illos túos misericórdes óculos
ad nos convérte.
Et Jésum, benedíctum frúctum véntris túi,
nóbis post hoc exsílíum osténde.
O clémens, O pía, O dúlcis Vírgo María.

Or:

*A*ve, Regína cælórum
Ave, Dómina Angelórum,
Sálve rádix, sálve, pórtá,
Ex qua mún-do lux est órta.
Gáude, Vírgo gloriósa,
Super ómnes speciósa ;
Vále, o valde decóra
Et pro nóbis Christum exóra.

Hail, O Queen of heaven enthroned.
Hail, by angels mistress owned.
Root of Jesse, Gate of morn
Whence the world's true light was born:
Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,
Loveliest whom in heaven they see;
Fairest thou, where all are fair,
Plead with Christ our souls to spare.

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