

John 11: 17-26; 38-44.

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 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.'

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 for 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 upwards 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.'



Reflection

What an appropriate reading for us at this time when activities we treasure appear to be dead or dying, and there is real fear that loved ones may also fall victim to COVID19. Interestingly, it is exactly at times like this that Jesus reminds us that he is Life when death seems to have overwhelmed us, He is the resurrection and the life!

Do you have some sense of being 'dead' in some areas of your life? What is keeping you in that grip of death? Do you have any awareness of what would need to change in your life to begin to become more alive again. Take a moment to talk with Jesus about this.

Do you hear Jesus asking you: 'Do you believe that I am the resurrection and the life?' In the long run nothing is more important than your answer to this. May be our prayer should be, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief."



Anglican Parish of the Otways Newsletter

Lent 5

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Anglican Parish of the Otways

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are living in unprecedented times which are causing much uncertainty and concern for you all. Let me assure you, we can trust in God who is with us and will see us through. God tells us in his word to “Be not afraid” 365 times, reassurance for us for each day of our year. So let us know the Lord is near, let's not be anxious about anything, but through prayer with thanksgiving, present our requests to God. If we do this, then the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:5-7)

Some thing that I think is concerning all of us is our inability to meet together for worship. How do remain faithful to our command to “Not give up meeting together” (Hebrews 5:25) while obeying the very sensible restrictions being enforced on us by the Government, who we are duty bound to obey (Romans 13 :1-7)?

This little care package, the first of many you will receive during this time of isolation, I hope will help you maintain your worship of God and unite us together just as if we were together in our beloved churches.

The idea is that you create a sacred space in your home where you can sit quietly to say your prayers. I would suggest you place a candle or lamp there, place your bible next to it, along with the small icon I have enclosed and a small cross.

The light reminds us, as one translation of Psalm 23 reads, “Even though you walk through a gloomy place, I will be with you to comfort you.” God is with us and he has a way forward for us. The Bible of course is the Word of God, something we need to cling to at this time. The icon reminds us of Jesus promise to always be with us (Matthew 28:20). The cross reminds us that the pain and anguish of Good Friday was followed by the joy of Easter.

You will have noticed that in this package is a booklet “Worship at Home”. If we all sit down in our sacred space at our usual Sunday worship time, then we will be joining together in corporate worship, even though we are apart. You may even like to call a friend and pray together over the phone.

In this News sheet, which will be delivered weekly to your home or by email, will be the Prayer of the week, Bible reading and short reflection to be used with the booklet.

I will be lighting a candle in the church each day and leaving the light on in the church porch as a sign to us all that the world might be in chaos but the Light of the World is with us and no darkness can overcome it. (John 1:5)

On a more practical matter, I remind you that the costs of the parish will not diminish during this time. Parishioners are encouraged to arrange Direct Credit payments to the Parish accounts if they have not already done so. If you are unsure how to do this your bank can help. Parish bank details are BSB 633 000 ACC 1685 80009. With the decline in visitor numbers it is vital that parishioners are faithful in their stewardship.

We will get through this both as individuals, families and as a Church so let us encourage each other and stay close, spiritually if not physically.

I will stay in touch with each one of you by phone through this time but if you need anything or know of someone who needs help, ring me. The Parish landline and mobile numbers are on the front page.

May the Lord bless you as you remain faithful at this time.
Peace be with you.
Jenny.



Prayer of the Week

We thank you heavenly father,
that you have delivered us from the powers of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
We pray that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
So by his presence abiding in us he may raise us to joys eternal;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.