



Diocese of
OWENSBORO

LITURGY OF THE WORD- 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

HYMN

Sung to the tune of "Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days"

**From ashes to the living font
Your Church must journey, Lord,
Baptized in grace, in grace renewed
By your most holy word.**

**Our graves split open, bring us back,
Your promise to proclaim;
To darkened tombs call out, "Arise!"
And glorify your name.**

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INTRODUCTION

Leader: We gather here to celebrate the Lord's Day.
Sunday has been called the Lord's Day because it was on this day
that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life.
Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate Mass today,
but let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world
and celebrate our redemption in Christ's suffering, Death and Resurrection.

All sign themselves with the sign of the cross saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God for ever.

All respond: Blessed be God for ever.

Leader: Let us pray.

Collect (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, one God, for ever and ever.

READINGS

It is encouraged that someone other than the leader should proclaim the readings of the day from a Bible. Otherwise, daily readings may be found at uscgb.org/bible/readings, and audio recordings of the daily readings may be found at uscgb.org/bible/readings-audio.cfm.

First reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 130:1-8

Refrain (all together): **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.

Refrain (all together): **With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,
LORD, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness,
that you may be revered.

Refrain (all together): **With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

I trust in the LORD;
my soul trusts in his word.
More than sentinels wait for the dawn,
let Israel wait for the LORD.

Refrain (all together): **With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

For with the LORD is kindness
and with him is plenteous redemption;
And he will redeem Israel
from all their iniquities.

Refrain (all together): **With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

Second Reading: Romans 8:8-11

Gospel (All stand for the reading of the Gospel. A layperson omits the greeting, “The Lord be with you” and proceeds to “A reading from the holy Gospel According to”): John 11:1-45

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

This week we have a reflection from Fr. Jason McClure, Vicar for Clergy and Director of Vocations:

St. Ambrose, at the funeral of his brother, said: “Death then, is no cause for mourning, for it is the cause of mankind’s salvation.” These words may seem strange at first and perhaps do very little to bring comfort to those who are mourning the death of a loved one. Apart from the story of salvation, these words would most certainly seem empty, meaningless, and maybe even anger provoking. But in the context of the Paschal Mystery, these words remind us that our hope is in Jesus Christ, whose death on a cross was the cause of our salvation. It is that death and his resurrection from the dead that we are preparing to remember and celebrate as we approach Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

This is the last Sunday of Lent before Palm (Passion) Sunday and our entrance into Holy Week. On the three Sundays leading up to Palm Sunday, we’ve heard from John’s Gospel, in which Jesus reveals himself to us in different ways.

Two weeks ago, on the 3rd Sunday of Lent, we heard the story of the woman at the well. Until her encounter with Jesus, this unnamed Samaritan woman was unaware of the fullness of life only Christ can give. Here Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah (Jn. 4:26) who gives us water that in us becomes a spring welling up to eternal life (Jn. 4:14). Her seemingly meaningless life was given new and divine purpose through this encounter.

Last week, on the 4th Sunday of Lent we heard the story of the man born blind. In it, Jesus reveals himself as “The light of the world” (Jn. 9:5), who opens the eyes of those who do not see, those who are spiritually blind (9:39). As Jesus restored sight to the blind man, so he restores sight to those whose spiritual blindness keeps them from recognizing God’s love for them. This spiritual blindness can keep us from recognizing the intrinsic value and worth of every human being from conception to natural death. It can also keep us from recognizing our own dignity as one created in God’s image and likeness. Spiritual blindness can keep us from recognizing our captivity to our own sins and our need for God’s forgiveness and mercy.

This Sunday, the 5th Sunday of Lent, we have what might be the greatest of Christ’s “I am” pronouncements. In the story of the raising of Lazarus, Jesus reveals himself as “The Resurrection and the Life:”

“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” (Jn. 11: 25-26).

The raising of Lazarus was an occasion on which Jesus demonstrated his power over death as the dead Lazarus was raised to life. But traditionally this great miracle of Jesus has been understood to refer also to those of us who have in some way or another experienced a spiritual death. Such spiritual death may manifest itself in any number of ways including but not limited to: anger, resentment, lack or loss of prayer in our lives, jealousy, lust, unwillingness to ask for and receive God’s forgiveness, and the unwillingness to forgive others. A spiritual dying might occur as we become more self-centered and less self-giving, when we rely on ourselves and do not place trust in God, when we are tempted to put our faith in things or other people and when we lose or abandon our faith in Christ.

One characteristic that seems to be present in each of the three passages from John’s Gospel we have read over the past three Sundays might be easily overlooked. In each story, it is Jesus who goes to the one whose life is changed. Jesus travels into Samaria and there encounters the Samaritan Woman. As Jesus was passing by, he

noticed the blind man and went to him. Upon hearing about Lazarus, Jesus went to his tomb. Jesus went to the woman at the well, and he gave her life meaning and purpose. Jesus went to the blind man and he restored his sight. Jesus went to Lazarus and he brought him back to life. Jesus goes to the farthest, darkest, most disagreeable states of our spiritual existence and there, if we let him, restores us, gives us sight, and brings us back to life.

In this time of uncertainty, we might easily find ourselves giving into despair, overcome by anxiety, or even paralyzed by fear. You or someone you know might have been directly affected by the Coronavirus, which has altered the lives of practically everyone on earth. The uncertainty, the challenges, and the changes this new reality has brought to our lives can leave us dwelling in darkness and cause us to lose hope and give into despair. Or, we can take this time to open ourselves to the many ways in which Christ might be coming to us and calling us to transform tragedy into triumph in imitation of Jesus on the cross, who transformed death into life. Is Jesus calling us to be hope for others? Can we share our resources with those who have less? Can we call and check on those who are alone during these times? Can we be united in our prayer with and for one another?

Perhaps more than ever before, this Lent will be the most powerful and spiritual many of us have or will ever experience, despite our separation from the Holy Mass and the Sacraments. These Gospel stories, through which Christ reveals himself as the Messiah, the Light of the World, and the Resurrection and the Life, offer us encouragement and remind us that in the end, Christ has power over death, love is more powerful than hate, and despair can be overcome by hope.

In a world and a time of uncertainty, there is one thing we know for sure. Our Lord comes to us in unexpected and surprising ways and gives our lives meaning and purpose, opens our eyes, and raises us to new life in him, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Christ's death and resurrection frees us from the power of death and opens for us the gates to eternal life, that we may have the hope of living eternally with him. Today's gospel ends with Jesus' final instruction to those who witnessed this great miracle, "Untie him, and let him go."

It is by his death and resurrection that Jesus frees us from the power of death and raises us to new life in him, who is the resurrection and the life. Truly, death is no longer a cause for despair. Our salvation is achieved by Christ's own death and resurrection. Therefore we can proclaim the mystery of our faith as we pray, "Save us, Savior of the world, for by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free."

Additionally, you can also find video reflections from the USCCB on the readings here:
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/>.

Observe a period of silence for reflection on the Word of God. You may want to ask the following questions:

What word or phrase is stirring in your heart?

How can you apply this message to your daily life?

PROFESSION OF FAITH (Nicene Creed)

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,
(At the words that follow, up to and including “and became man,” all bow.)
and by the Holy Spirit 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.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: With faith in God’s promises, let us now present our needs and petitions.

You or members of your family can be invited to speak out their intercessions, to which all reply, “Lord, hear our prayer.” It would be good to include a prayer for the end of the coronavirus pandemic and a return to public Sunday Eucharist.

Leader: Incline your merciful ear to our prayers, we ask, O Lord, and listen in kindness to the supplications of those who call on you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
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. Amen.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

Make a prayer of thanksgiving. This can be your own personal prayer of thanksgiving, a canticle of praise from scripture, or you may choose one of the following Psalms: Psalm 100; Psalm 113; Psalm 118:1-4, 19-29; Psalm 136; Psalm 150

CONCLUDING RITE

In solidarity with our diocese, here you could include Pope Francis' prayer to Mary for protection against the coronavirus found at the beginning of the *Diocese of Owensboro Prayer Companion*.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All sign themselves with the cross.

Response: Amen

As an option here, you could add "Let us offer each other the sign of peace," extending a sign of Christ's peace to your loved ones by way of a hug, kiss, or whatever would be most appropriate for your situation.

HYMN

How Can I Keep from Singing?

**No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?**

Robert Lowry, 1876