



# St Johns Weekly Sheet

Sunday 29th March

Lent 5

*As we are scattered, we can still join together in worship. At 10.30am on Sunday, light a candle, and let us all together, unite in our prayers.*

## Prayer for the Week

Gracious Father,  
You gave up your Son  
Out of love for the world:  
Lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
That we may know eternal peace  
Through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



## **John 11. 1-45**

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of 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 sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, 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 he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews 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 for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the 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 she 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. He 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 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.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him

## REFLECTION

I hope that you are keeping well, and looking after yourselves. These are definitely challenging days, and it is hard for many being separated from the one we love, our friends and our family.

Following the announcement from the Government on Monday night, the church is now closed. This is unprecedented, and highlights the seriousness of the situation we are living through. The church however, is much more than the building, it is the Body of Christ, we all still have a vital part to play in the coming weeks and months. We need to live out our lives as people of prayer, we need to be praying, perhaps more than we have ever done before. We also need to do our part to keep people safe, so please do follow the new restrictions as laid out by government.

We will be endeavouring to keep this news sheet going, as a way in which to keep connected. I will be uploading a video on Sunday morning to encourage us to join together in prayer at 10.30am (this will now be from home not church). We will also be keeping in touch with you all as much as possible by phone.

Our reading today, expresses the pain Mary, Martha and indeed Jesus felt at the death of their brother and dear friend Lazarus, but it is also a reading which reminds us of the resurrection hope found in Christ.

I came across a poem entitled 'Lazarus' by Dan Doyle, which gives a perspective on how powerful and yet tender our Lord Jesus is. I hope it might bring you some comfort, and food for thought over the coming week.

What is there that can  
diminish the sorrow of loss  
when one whom we've loved dies?

Sorrow, oh sorrow deep!

Our brother, Lazarus is dead!

Emptiness has entered the house.

There is only the sound of wailing.

The rooms are redolent

with frankincense and myrrh.

We pray the Kaddish,

make the preparations for the meal

that will be served to those

who come to help us bury him.

"If only his friend had been here,

He would not have died,"

We say to one another.

If only...If only...

Is our desperate prayer.

“Rabbi, If you had been here  
my brother would not have died.”

“Martha, he will rise again.”

“Yes, I know this, Rabbi.

At the Resurrection.”

“I am the one who raises the dead.

Do you believe me, Martha?”

“Yes, Master. Oh, yes, I believe.

I know you and with all my heart

I believe in you.”

Then, Jesus wept.

The crowd gathered before the tomb  
desperate with terrible grief and loss.  
Then they heard Martha and Mary’s friend,  
the one they called, Jesus,  
ordering some of the men to remove  
the heavy stone that had been placed  
at the entrance to the sepulcher some days ago.  
Confused and wary they rolled it back.  
The dark heart of the death-ditch  
was then revealed to us all.  
Some of us fell back for fear of the stench  
we thought would emanate from the grave,  
but a fresh breeze wafted out instead.  
A breathless silence fell over us.  
Then, with a voice full of authority,  
Jesus spoke, and everything came alive  
around us...

“Lazarus, come out!”

As if one, we sucked in a surprised breath.

There, standing in the cave’s dark maw,

was the grave-wrapped Lazarus

strait, tall, his face still covered in cloth.

“Remove his bindings. Set him free.”

A young man stepped forward awkwardly

and nervously took the wrappings away

then stumbled back and we all could see...

The look in Lazarus’ eyes

wide with wonder,

struck all of us dumb.

There he was!

Life breathing in him,

The spirit-spark in his eyes.

We rushed to him,

our faces streaming tears.

In the days that followed  
we talked excitedly about this miracle  
that we had all been witness to.

And, still, many could not believe  
in their weary and frightened hearts  
that this son of an old carpenter from Nazareth,  
this wandering rabbi, Jesus,  
might be the one we have been waiting for  
since the time of Moses and the prophets.  
But some of us knew that this Jesus,  
who had come so gently,  
yet so powerfully among us,  
was, indeed, the Messiah of God  
and we began to tell everyone we met  
what we had seen him do for Lazarus, our friend.

Lazarus lived on for many years  
and never tired of telling the story.  
in hushed and awe-filled tones.  
And we never tired of listening.  
Lazarus was a man of gentle knowledge,  
of abiding faith, and of quiet strength.  
He told us over and over again  
that we were loved by one  
who knows our hearts, and who  
despises not our petitions,  
and that we would never be alone.  
We began going to the synagogue differently.  
We listened to the words the Rabbi read  
from the ancient prophets more closely  
and we were moved in our hearts and minds.

At long last, Lazarus died  
and we wept for sorrow again.  
But we knew in our depths  
that he was not dead,  
that the Resurrection  
promised by the prophets is real,  
that death no longer holds sway  
over our simple lives,  
and that we will see each other again  
in the world to come.

**Amen**

## **ST JOHNS NOTICE BOARD**

- ◆ It has been lovely to welcome new friends to our Facebook page, if this is something you would like to do, search for **St John's Margate** and ask to join.
- ◆ I will be continuing to say morning and evening prayer everyday, if you would like me to add anyone to my prayers please email me or text me on 07805699519.
- ◆ If you are struggling to get the things you need, do get in touch with me so we can help you.
- ◆ If you have been identified as someone who is extremely vulnerable , you will have been contacted by the NHS. The website for registering if you are extremely vulnerable and need assistance is

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable)

If you need help with this do get in touch.

- ◆ Are there any birthdays coming up, it wont be the same as when we are in church, but we can still sing to you from our homes!
- ◆ **Creative Times** As Easter draws close, we invite you to dust off your creative skills, and produce a picture, piece of poetry or short story, a crafty design which reflects on a part of the Easter story. This is open to **all ages**. Entries by email, text or Facebook (A photo of pictures or crafty designs can be sent in). Entries will be shared with all- hopefully this will bring us all a little cheer.

**If you need to live out your faith in your isolation,  
why not telephone someone, to let them know that they are not alone.**

**If you are lonely, telephone Revd Dawn 01843 298709 or 07805699519**

**“For God has said, ‘I will not leave you or forsake you’ so we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear’.” (Hebrews 13:5-6)**

**“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not be dismayed.” (Deuteronomy 31:8)**