

'Jesus wept' : Thoughts for Sunday on the Gospel of John Chapter 11 verses 1-45

written by Revd Janet

The Gospel for this week is the story of Jesus weeping alongside Mary and Martha and of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. What a powerful reminder, in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, of the compassion of Jesus – that Jesus is not remote or aloof; Jesus is right here.

While we read the Gospel in the context of Jesus's earthly life, we also bring to the reading the pictures we see on the news of corpses and mortuaries, and of much lament as the virus takes a hold on many lives worldwide. As we pray we too echo Jesus' words to Lazarus: 'Lazarus, come out!' that death will be overcome and that lives will be saved.

One challenge is for us personally to accept that we are all Lazarus in some way and that our world is full of dark places where lives are lost or inhumanity reigns. We are all bound in some way by clothes that the world lays on us. We are held down by our anxieties, the burdens of our past, our fears for the future, the sins of yesterday and today, the expectations of others and our own insecurities. The good news is that Jesus calls us out [of the tomb] and breathes his holy breath into us again and again, today and tomorrow, he makes us a new creation, he frees us and shines his light in our darkness and gives us life.

The raising of Lazarus isn't just a miracle that Jesus performed two thousand years ago in a land far far away - it's the work of Jesus today. As we pray this week...

... let us offer our thanks for the many volunteers, and for all those still carrying out essential work, who have collectively heard his call this week to 'come out' to bring life and light to places of despair and darkness.

... let us pray without anger towards God. Instead let us pray trusting he is weeping with us as we ask his Spirit to breathe healing to every home and situation, and to give wisdom and knowledge to all who can defeat the virus.

... and let us pray for life again to be lived in all fullness, with increased faith that Jesus 'is the resurrection and the life' the source of eternal love and promise.