

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, 26th MARCH 2023

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14 Vision of the valley of dry bones (NIVUK)

³⁷ The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me to and fro among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³ He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'Sovereign LORD, you alone know.' ⁴ Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!" ⁵ This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath^[a] enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶ I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'" ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army. ¹¹ Then he said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off." ¹² Therefore prophecy and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'" "

Psalm 130

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; ² Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. ³ If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. ⁵ I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. ⁶ I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. ⁷ Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. ⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11 The Spirit of God lives in you (NIVUK)

⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life^[a] because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[b] his Spirit who lives in you.

GOSPEL: John 11:1-45 The raising of Lazarus- Jesus' last sign (NIVUK)

¹¹ Now a man named Lazarus was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay ill, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, 'Lord, the one you love

is ill.’⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, ‘This illness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was two more days,⁷ and then he said to his disciples, ‘Let us go back to Judea.’⁸ ‘But Rabbi,’ they said, ‘a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?’⁹ Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the day-time will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light.¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.’¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.’¹² His disciples replied, ‘Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.’¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead,¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]) said to the rest of the disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[b] from Jerusalem,¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.²¹ ‘Lord,’ Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother would not have died.²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.’²³ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’²⁴ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’²⁵ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’²⁷ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she replied, ‘I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. ‘The Teacher is here,’ she said, ‘and is asking for you.’²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.³⁴ ‘Where have you laid him?’ he asked. ‘Come and see, Lord,’ they replied.³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ Then the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’³⁷ But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.³⁹ ‘Take away the stone,’ he said. ‘But, Lord,’ said Martha, the sister of the dead man, ‘by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.’⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?’⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.’⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Take off the grave clothes and let him go.’⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.