

Reflection on the Gospel — 5th Sunday of Lent Year A (John 11:1-45)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Sunday's readings touch into the most profound of mysteries, the mysteries of life and death. To hold a new born child or to see the sick restored to health is to experience the wonder of life. On the other hand, sudden death can bring unimagined grief and pain. The news this morning (March 23) tells us that 14,641 people have died from Coronavirus over the past two months. Some have died alone. With this pandemic comes an extraordinary outpouring of grief and fear. This comes in the wake of bushfires that saw the death of some 1.25 billion animals in my country and deep sorrow at the prospect of species loss. Death brings tears, even anger. Little wonder that "life" becomes a metaphor for transformation and new beginnings or that "death" so often signifies deprivation and loss.

The gospel reading is about the death and restoration to life of Lazarus, "the one whom Jesus loved". It is the last of the seven "signs" in John's "book of signs" that reveal the "glory" of God. It is also the greatest of Jesus' signs. It functions as a catalyst for the events that lead to his death: "...from that day on they planned to put him to death" (11:53). It provides the occasion for Jesus to assert "I am the resurrection and the life" and to invite assent to that revelation of his identity. It reveals the compassion and tender heart of Jesus who weeps at the grief of Mary his friend and at the death of her brother. It also reveals the goodness in the hearts of those "Jews" who share her grief and who come to faith in Jesus who raises the dead to life.

Though the story revolves around the plight of Lazarus, Martha and Mary are the characters who, with Jesus, occupy centre stage and into whose faith journey we are invited to enter. Martha and Mary are identified as "sisters" who live in Bethany. Are they blood "sisters" or sisters in their love of Jesus and the community around him, or both? Lazarus is Mary's sick "brother". Martha will later claim him as her "brother". Might they all be part of a little faith community in Bethany rather than biological siblings? A brief notice alerts the reader to the imminent death of Jesus: "Mary is the one who anointed Jesus with perfumed oil and wiped his feet with her tears". The reader will later discover that Mary's anointing of Jesus is "for the day of [his] burial". As so often in John's gospel, misunderstanding and irony function to bring the actors in the drama, and to bring us as actors in the theatre of Christian life, to new levels of understanding and faith. Right now, in the face of a pandemic, we are called, as sisters and brothers across the globe, to play our part so that this illness may lead to greater love and even to "life".

ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT — YEAR A, SUNDAY 29TH MARCH 2020

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity
of all children and vulnerable adults.*

St Alipius' Parish Church
82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

SS Peter & Paul's Church
701 Fischen St, BUNINYONG 3357

Contact Details

Parish Office & Presbytery: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350

Hours: 9.30am - 1.30pm Tues, Thurs, Fri

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Parish Website: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

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SAP Liturgy email: sapliturgy@gmail.com

Parish Priest: Fr. Jorge De Chavez OSJ

In Residence: Fr. Eladio Lizada OSJ

Parish Coordinator: Lucy O'Beirne

Finance Officer: Kerrie McTigue

Child Safety Officer: Roxanne Leed

Hall Caretaker: Gavin Maguire

Funeral Ministry: Carmel Flynn & Kathy Curran

Liturgy Coordinator: David Santamaria

Parish Finance Committee Members:

Paul Jans (Chair), Kathy Curran, Arnoud
Goossens, Tanya Hislop, Brett Holloway
& John White.

Some Online Mass Options & Resources for prayer

St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne: <https://www.melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>

Mon-Fri 1.00pm Mass streamed live daily

Sunday Mass 11.00am or available as a recording

Pope Francis' Daily Mass:

www.vaticannews.va/en/pope-francis/mass-casa-santa-marta.pagelist.html

Prayer for Spiritual Communion:

"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. 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."
Pope Francis

Prayer Resources

- Ballarat Diocese Website: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au
- St Alipius' Parish Liturgy Website: www.sapliturgy.net.au

Next Week's Readings: Palm Sunday — Year A

First: Isaiah 50:4-7

Second: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Matthew 26:14-27:66

Death: Maxwell Litchfield, Dianne Pascoe

Unwell: We pray for Kateri Byrnes, Carmel Doherty, Pat Hogan, Cathy Jones, Peter Martin, Letitia Simmons, Margie Wilmott and all who are unwell

Church Closures and Words from Bishop Paul

"In line with government directives aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus, all churches will be closed to the public at least until April 14. Please continue your prayers at home for the health of our community. ... We might recall the words of the gospel that was read on Ash Wednesday ... "Jesus said to his disciples, 'When you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.' "(Matthew 6:6) We can pray in our own homes. In a spiritual sense, we can go into the private room of our heart in times of reflection. There we can speak with God about our own needs and about the needs of people around the world. ... God bless you all, Bishop Paul"

Baptisms, Funerals & Weddings

Baptisms are currently suspended. Funerals are permitted with a maximum of ten mourners and weddings may have a maximum of five people in total with all recommended precautions observed. Please contact Fr Jorge via the parish office.

Spiritual Communion

During this period of church closures, collection of consecrated hosts to distribute in private homes is not permissible. A spiritual communion is a uniting of oneself to the Sacrifice of the Mass through prayer. A prayer that is ideal to pray during Communion time when participating in online Mass is printed on the front of the notice-sheet.

Holy Week At Home

Palm Sunday: Blessed palms will be available from the table outside the presbytery.

Holy Week Prayer Sheets: *Liturgy Brisbane* has generously prepared and shared prayer sheets to follow throughout Holy Week at home. There are five separate pamphlets covering Palm Sunday, The End of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Sets of these are available from the presbytery porch-table for collection and will be emailed to those on the bulletin mailing list (see below).

Receiving the Weekly Notice-Sheet — How to Get Your Copy

1. **Website:** Go to www.ballarat.catholic.org.au & search St Alipius. Email use: [direct link](#).
2. **Email:** Please contact the parish office to have your address added to the mailing list.
3. **Paper copies** are now available on the presbytery porch for personal pick-up. Holy Water also available. Thank you to Gavin and Dennis Maguire who have offered to hand deliver to mailboxes of any parishioner without technological or physical access at this time. Please call the parish office to arrange (other parishioners encouraged to support neighbours likewise if able).

Parish:	Envelopes:	\$ unavailable
	Loose:	\$ unavailable
	Direct Debits:	\$ 365.00
	Credit Cards (mthly)	\$ 2832.00
		\$ 3197.00

Presbytery: \$ unavailable

Thank you to those who were able to contribute to the collections last weekend



Fifth Sunday of Lent
29th March 2020



Tawonga is a 10-year-old girl living with a disability, and struggling with food insecurity and discrimination in Malawi. Since participating in a Caritas Australia supported program, Tawonga's life has transformed.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to so this transformational program can continue to empower vulnerable women, men and children, and strengthen the communities around them.

Let's Go Further, Together. You can donate through Parish boxes or envelopes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

Happy 50th Birthday to Fr Jorge

Might be a quieter party than planned but our prayers and warmest wishes are with you, Fr Jorge! A card & gift has been passed onto Fr Jorge on behalf of the parish.

Belated Thanks: A card & gift has been passed onto Fr Justin Driscoll acknowledging his wonderful contribution to our parish when he recently acted as our live-in Administrator.

Planned Giving, Special and Loose Collection Offerings

Whilst organised direct debit offerings can continue, contributions made via envelopes or cash (in a sealed and marked envelope) can be posted through the mail-slot of the presbytery whenever convenient. Envelopes for Easter are available on the table on the presbytery porch.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Review (RCIA)

St Alipius and Ss Peter & Paul's Communities

The RCIA Program has significantly contributed to the mission and life of the parish over many years and for its continuance it is timely to review this program. We are inviting nominations for two representative from each community to be part of a rewarding and fulfilling ministry within the RCIA Team. Please forward nominations to John Clonan (0478770598) where further information is available outlining the role and time commitment. We have a number of inquirers interested in being a part of this program in 2020-21.

St Alipius' Parish Finance Committee — Vacancies Open

Nominations from parishioners are still open until Easter for new members to join the committee. Self-nominations can be made. **Members of the St Alipius' faith community are particularly encouraged to offer a nomination** to ensure equitable representation across the parish. Please email the parish office outlining the name of the nominee, reasons for their suitability, nominee contact details and your own name. Appointed Finance Committee members are required to provide/attain a National Police Check and a Working With Children Check (assistance provided through the parish office).

St Vincent De Paul Call Centre — 5334 2844 lines open 24/7