

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live,
and I will place you in your own land.

First Reading

My soul awaits the Lord more than watchmen for daybreak.

Psalm

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.

Everyone who believes in me shall never die.

Gospel Acclamation

Father, help us to be like Christ your Son,
who loved the world and died for our salvation.
Inspire us by his love, guide us by his example.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Ezekiel 37: 12–14; Psalm 129 (130); Romans 8: 8–11; John 11: 1–45



Frank Wesley, 1923-2002, *Forgiving Father*.
Estate of Frank Wesley, <http://www.frankwesleyart.com/>

With the Lord
there is mercy,
in him is
plentiful
redemption.

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

Duccio, *The Raising of Lazarus*, c.1310



PREGO LEAFLET

Fifth Sunday of Lent
Year A, 22nd March 2026

'Unbind him and let him go'

As we approach Holy Week, our readings focus on the theme of being restored to life. The Scripture is full of hope, inviting us to trust in God's promise of resurrection and eternal life.

The Israelites, living in exile in Babylon, lack hope and direction (**First Reading**). But the Lord speaks through the prophet Ezekiel, telling how he will raise them up. He will put his Spirit within them, giving them new life, and restore them to their homeland.

This prophecy is fulfilled in the **Gospel**. Here, God's love and power over death are made known as Lazarus is raised by Jesus, the One who brings life where there is death. Jesus reveals himself as 'the resurrection and the life', calling us to believe and trust in him. His deep compassion and love are highlighted as he weeps with Mary and Martha.

The **Psalm** encourages us to cry out to the Lord with longing and honesty. In expressing deep sorrow for our sins, we can trust in the Lord's 'mercy and plentiful redemption'.

St Paul (**Second Reading**) reminds us that living by Christ's Spirit – the Spirit of truth, love, compassion and justice – gives us hope, and brings true life and peace.

In my prayer today, I might reflect deeply on who Jesus really is, and what it is that he brings. What might living by his Spirit look like for me this week?



Opening 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.

Psalm 129 (130)

R:/ With the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ears be attentive
to the sound of my pleadings.

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

But with you is found forgiveness,
that you may be revered.

I long for you, O Lord,
my soul longs for his word.
My soul awaits the Lord
more than watchmen for daybreak.

More than watchmen for daybreak,
let Israel hope for the Lord.

For with the Lord there is mercy,
in him is plentiful redemption.
It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

How do I come to prayer today? I place myself before the Lord just as I am. I may find it helpful to take some deep breaths. I call on the Holy Spirit who dwells within me to guide my prayer.

When ready, I turn to the psalm. What word or line especially draws me? I stay with it, pondering why that is.

The psalmist cries out to the Lord here. How do I call out to God? What do I want to say?

Perhaps I tell him about how things are, and how I'm feeling. Am I struggling with something? Reminding myself that he loves me unconditionally, I tell the Lord whatever is troubling me.

What am I seeking? Perhaps I need to ask for forgiveness ... or patience ... or healing ... or strength ... or greater trust ... or something else? I may like to pray the psalm's refrain again.

I can share my hopes, my deepest longings with the Lord ... and I listen to him.

In time, I thank the Lord, and close my prayer with a slow sign of the cross.

Gospel John 11: 3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45 (part)

The sisters of Lazarus sent to Jesus, saying, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it he said, 'This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he 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.' So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.' 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. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.' Jesus was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.'

When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with 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 he did, believed in him.

I become quiet and aware of the Lord's presence before reading this passage. Perhaps I picture the scene in my mind's eye. What am I noticing?

- Perhaps Martha, declaring her faith in Jesus as the Son of God, but disappointed, even angry, that he hadn't come sooner?
- Jesus weeping with his friends; his conversation with his Father?
- Or Jesus calling Lazarus to come out, and telling people to unbind him?

Where am I called to respond with this same deep compassion of Jesus?

What might I wish to ask Jesus to help me unbind? Where do I need him to free me, so that I can experience more fully the life he wants me to lead?

How can I help others be open to the love of God?

Giving thanks for the invitation to life with Jesus, I end with an 'Our Father'.