



St Philip's *Come & See*

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Sunday 29 March 2020

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Today the Eucharist will be celebrated at 8.00am and will be live via Facebook. If you use Facebook, please ensure you *like* and *follow* our page so you receive notifications. It will remain on the page for viewing later. We are aware that not everyone uses Facebook and we hope to introduce an alternative in the coming weeks.

Dear Friends

I hope that this finds you well, and that you are coping with the constraints that are being placed on us all. On this, the fifth Sunday in Lent (29 March), the Eucharist will be celebrated at 0800am at St Philip's and will be live-streamed on our Facebook page. I hope that you can join in, you will find the readings and prayers for the service below. Naturally, this first attempt is somewhat experimental and no doubt we can find improvements as the weeks progress. Canon Scott will preside and offer a short reflection on the readings.

This type of media and communication is alien to many of us, particularly if we are over 50, but I hope that we can begin to communicate and engage freely with each other, when appropriate.

I have adopted a 'military mentality' about our situation. Twice I have been sent away for six month tours of duty – no alcohol, no restaurants, strict regulations regarding movement, and no physical contact with family and friends. I created routines for myself, planned to read books that I normally wouldn't tackle, I recall trying to engage with all Mahler's symphonies, I enlivened my prayer life, exercised regularly and I was careful about communication. Many of the young soldiers I worked with called their wives and girlfriends too often! They invariably had little to say and this resulted in arguments.

If you are feeling out of sorts or isolated in any way and would like to speak with someone but are not too sure who to call don't hesitate to give me a ring. If you are calling other folk remember that communication is as much physical as verbal, your body language and expressions can't be seen over the phone... I feel like the Padre at war once again!

Every blessing to you all in this trying time.

Martin

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Sentence

'I am the resurrection and the life' says the Lord; 'whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.'

John 11:25-26

Prayer of the day

Life-giving God,
your Son came into the world
to free us all from sin and death:
breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit,
that we may be raised to new life in Christ,
and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Today's Readings

A reading from book of the prophet Ezekiel (37:1-14)

¹The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' ⁴Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

Psalm 130

1 Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord:
Lord, hear my voice;

**2 O let your ears consider well:
the voice of my supplication.**

3 If you, Lord, should note what we do wrong:
who then, O Lord, could stand?

**4 But there is forgiveness with you:
so that you shall be feared.**

5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him:
and in his word is my hope.

**6 My soul looks for the Lord:
more than watchmen for the morning, more, I say, than watchmen for the morning.**

7 O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy:
and with him is ample redemption.

8 He will redeem Israel: from the multitude of their sins.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (8:6-11)

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

The gospel according to John (11:1-45)

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴But 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.' ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹Jesus 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. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹²The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

²⁸ 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.' ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The 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. ³²When 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.' ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' ³⁷But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus 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.' ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹So they took away

the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I 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.' ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴The 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.' ⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Reflection

It is at times such as these that we are tempted to ask 'where is God in all this? In a famous book, *After Auschwitz*, Richard Rubenstein asks how it is even possible for a Jew to believe in God after the holocaust. How can we believe in God in the face of God's seeming inaction in the face of suffering and evil?

There have been countless attempts to answer this question. Peter Kreeft, CS Lewis, and Teilhard de Chardin, among others, have written insightful books on this question from inside Christian theology. Christians believe that what is ultimately at stake is human freedom and God's respect for it. God gives us freedom and (unlike almost everyone else) refuses to violate it, even when it would seem beneficial to do so. That leaves us in a lot of pain at times, but, as Jesus reveals, *God is not so much a rescuing God as a redeeming one*. God does not protect us from pain, but instead enters it and ultimately redeems it.

In today's gospel when Jesus hears that Lazarus is sick he doesn't rush to his bedside. By the time he arrives Lazarus has died and his sisters Martha and Mary give voice to that universal theological dilemma: 'If you had been here my brother would not have died!' or 'Where were you when my brother died?' It is a question given voice for us all - where is God when innocent people suffer? Where was God during the holocaust? Where is God when anyone's brother or sister dies? Where is God now?

Jesus does not directly engage the question; instead he becomes distressed and asks: 'Where have you put him?' And when they offer to show him, he begins to weep. His answer to suffering? He enters into peoples' helplessness and pain. Afterwards, he raises Lazarus from the dead. The God we believe in doesn't necessarily intervene and rescue us from suffering and death - although we do pray in that way. Instead God redeems our suffering by entering completely into it.

Yes, in these difficult times we might be tempted to ask 'where is God in all this?' But sometimes the only answer to the question of suffering and evil is the one Jesus gave to Mary and Martha—shared helplessness, shared distress, and shared tears, with no attempt to try to explain God's seeming absence, but rather a trusting that, because God is all-loving and all-powerful, in the end all shall be well and our pain will one day be redeemed in God's embrace.

Prayers

Let us pray to the Lord,
who is our refuge and stronghold.
For the health and well-being of our nation,
and those nations most affected by the Corona Virus
that all who are fearful and anxious, for the grief stricken
may be at peace and free from worry:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For the isolated and housebound,
the unemployed and homeless,
that we may be alert to their needs,
and care for them in their vulnerability:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For all health professionals
doctors, nurses, administrators,

and all who care.

May they know themselves to be agents of God's healing love.

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For our homes and families,
our schools, universities and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Particularly at this time we seek healing for Roger Sharp, Ros Dalziel,
Sam Mahony, Ben Haseler, Hugh Gulliver
and all suffering from the effects of the Pandemic.

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend to God's eternal keeping all who have died.
For those who have died recently and unexpectedly,
and for those whose anniversary of death occurs this week
especially David Lineker (29/3/1996) and Suzanne Lewis (2/4/1999)

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord;

and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

News

The Parish Council will meet this week in a Teleconference. Important items on our agenda will be communication and finances. It seems very likely that we'll be unable to gather to worship for some time, this will potentially place significant strain on the finances of the Parish and our ability to sustain ministry into the future. Please be mindful and prayerful of this issue, the Council will be providing more information as over the coming weeks we assess the situation.

Below are details of Parish bank accounts if you are able to give electronically.

If you managed to worship via the live stream please let us know how we might improve this project to enable you to engage as fully as possible.

I been asking our folk what they have found useful for their spiritual nourishment, one of our number wrote: *I like this offering:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjOgcMQXvSc> *It's David Suchet doing a performance reading in a church of St Mark's gospel. It goes for about 2 hours. Suggesting that people sit down on a Sunday morning and watch would be a great Lenten activity.*

Canon Scott thought you might like to see a classic interpretation of tomorrow's Gospel reading, about the raising of Lazarus, from the 1965 film 'The Greatest Story Ever Told', with a young Max von Sydow as Jesus. Note as he prays at the tomb that he uses a line from tomorrow's Ezekiel reading, about the valley of the dry bones: "Come from the four winds, O breath."

Here's a ten-minute YouTube clip for you to enjoy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm27nCGm9DQ>

The Bishop has sent the following to all Parishes:

Dear sisters and brothers,

Please find below a link to the first of a series of weekly reflections I plan to be filming during our COVID-19 shutdown. You are welcome to share it through your networks and/or make use of it in any online or livestreamed church you are producing for this Sunday.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QbigaPxOtM>

There is also a link to the video on the Diocesan website on the 'Keep Connected at a Distance' page: <https://anglicancq.org.au/keep-connected/>

Yours in the Risen Jesus, +Mark

Some may find it helpful to know that Woolworths will deliver food orders to anyone who is in special need. You will need to fill out a form online with pension or similar details and state why you need a food delivery, i.e. no car or family not around.

At present we are looking at ways in which we can continue to support the outreach of St John's Care. They face an unprecedented demand for services and their stocks of food etc are very low. More on this in the coming weeks.

This 'News' section of the pew sheet is available if you have any news for the wider parish. During this time where we are trying to isolate ourselves as much as possible please send your news to Pewsheets@stphilipsoconnor.org.au

***During this time when we are unable to gather
please consider giving to St. Philip's using electronic transfer.
EFT details: Account Name – St Philip's Anglican Church
BSB Number: 702-389 Account No: 05202512
Reference/description: St Phil Offering
Thank you.***

