

‘ASKING MARTHA, MARY, LAZARUS TO HELP US DURING COVID-19’
5th Sunday of Lent 2020 ~ 29 March 2020



The Raising of Lazarus | Léon Joseph Florentin Bonnat c. 1857 | public domain

THE COUNTRIES DEEPLY AFFECTED

By the end of COVID-19, the countries deeply affected, could write the history and timeline of the commitment of people who cared and who showed courage, compassion and self-discipline, self-sacrifice and love of neighbour.

Each of those countries could also record the major mistakes made, such as complacency, denial, lack of vision and planning, lack for respect for others by social distance and hygiene. Whether denial and covering up at a critical stage like in China, or the media report which led to people fleeing the north of Italy, before the lockdown came into force.

The **Word of God** speaks to us across the generations and millennia, and in the many experiences our world faces.

IN A TIME OF CRISIS

In a time of crisis, we turn to see Mary and Martha grieving for Lazarus in today's Gospel of John 11:1-45. All three are friends of Jesus.

What can we learn from each of their encounters with Jesus?

WE ASK MARTHA WHOSE FAITH WAS DEEPENED BY JESUS

‘When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home.’

We are all different in personality.

Martha comes out to see Jesus. Mary stays at home.

Sometimes we are like Martha seeking out Jesus, and sometimes we leave it to others.

Martha has a strong conviction that Lazarus would not have died if Jesus had been there.

Now Jesus will help her to deepen her faith.

*‘Jesus said to her,
“I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.
Do you believe this?”*

*She said to him,
“Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah the Son of God,
the one coming into the world.” “*

Martha shares the Good News as a disciple.
She goes to Mary and shares the invitation to come and see.
Martha is a witness to Jesus.
Jesus calls each of us to share the Good News.

Thank you, Martha, for inviting us
to come closer to Jesus and see for ourselves.
Thank you, Martha, for reminding us to be witnesses to Jesus.

WE ASK MARY WHO DRAWS OUT THE TEARS AND PAIN OF JESUS

*‘When 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.” “*

Mary has professed her faith. She follows the lead of Jesus.

*Does God care about us?
Is God moved by our feelings and desperate cries for help?*

Let us see for ourselves as the Gospel continues.

*“When Jesus saw her weeping,
and the Jews who came with her also weeping,
he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.
He said,
“Where have you laid him?”
They said to him, “Lord, come and see.”
Jesus began to weep.
So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”*

Jesus was deeply moved. He wept.
Jesus is moved by our pleas,
even when we don't see the bigger picture.
We trust in God to answer our prayers,
and for God to see the bigger picture that we can't see at this moment.

Thank you, Mary, for opening up your pain and tears to Jesus,
which drew out the pain Jesus felt for her suffering.

We are moved by the pain Jesus feels for the human family during this Pandemic.
In love Jesus wept.
In love Jesus knows our tears.

WE ASK LAZARUS WHO ALLOWS JESUS TO SET HIM FREE

Back to the Gospel. What will happen? The suspense is enormous.
Jesus *'cried with a loud voice,*
"Lazarus, come out!"

The Gospel continues:

*'The 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."
Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary
and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.'"*

We think of Jesus the Good Shepherd
as he calls out and heals Lazarus.
Lazarus awakens from four days of death.
Lazarus, the disciple, has the courage
to come out of the tomb and face life again.

Thank you, Lazarus, for responding to the voice of Jesus.
Thank you, Lazarus, for your courage to come out of the tomb
and begin again, renewed in spirit.

We pray that we have the courage to follow the voice of Jesus now,
and when the Pandemic ends in the future, we have the courage to begin anew.

We learn about ourselves, and how to hope
as we watch Martha, Mary and Lazarus encounter Jesus.
Through wars, conflicts, epidemics and pandemics of the last 2.000 years,
the encounters of Martha, Mary and Lazarus have been a source of inspiration and hope.

Their responses to Jesus, help us in the present turmoil,
and in the future, to renew the world around us.

This weekend we thank and pray for our health professionals here and overseas.
Prayer link: [PRAYER TO JESUS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS](https://universalis.com/Australia/20200329/mass.htm)

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry
[Readings <https://universalis.com/Australia/20200329/mass.htm>]