



THE SAVING WORD

MATTHEW

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT / A

22 MARCH 2026

FIRST READING

Ezek 37:12-14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 129. R. v. 7

R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, / Lord, hear my voice! / O let your ears be attentive / to the voice of my pleading. **R.**

2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, / Lord, who would survive? / But with you is found forgiveness: / for this we revere you. **R.**

3. My soul is waiting for the Lord, / I count on his word. / My soul is longing for the Lord / more than watchman for daybreak. / (Let the watchman count on daybreak / and Israel on the Lord.) **R.**

4. Because with the Lord there is mercy / and fullness of redemption, / Israel indeed he will redeem / from all its iniquity. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 8:8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he will give life to your own mortal bodies.

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been



justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 11:25, 26

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me will not die for ever. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

I am the resurrection and the life.

The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.'



The Parish of St Joseph's, Elsternwick & Holy Cross, Caulfield South
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PARISH PRIEST: Rev Fr Leenus Neetany SAC

Assistant Priest: Rev Fr Eugene San SAC
Permanent Deacon: Rev John Lam
Parish Coordinator: Joanna Lam

ST JOSEPH'S, ELSTERNWICK

71 Orrong Road, Elsternwick 3185

Mass

Friday 10:00am, Saturday 6:30pm and Sunday 10:30am

Reconciliation

Friday after Mass, Saturday 6:00pm

HOLY CROSS, CAULFIELD SOUTH

707 Glen Huntly Road, Caulfield South 3162

Mass

Thursday 10:00am and Sunday 9:00am

Reconciliation

Thursday after Mass

ST ANTHONY'S, GLEN HUNTLY

74, Grange Road, Glen Huntly 3163

In Residence: Fr Pat Jackson SAC, Br Lindsay Rust SAC

Mass

Monday - Saturday 9:15am

Saturday 6:00pm

Sunday 9:00am, 11:00am, 5:00pm

Reconciliation

30-mins before all Masses & Saturday 9:45-10:10am

Thanksgiving & Special Collections

Church: \$1561.80 Presbytery: \$1586.80

Special Collection: -

Next Week's Roster

Lectors:

Saturday 6:30pm Young Adults

Sunday 9:00am M Nelson 10:30am D Joseph

Counters: B Leong & E Ambrose

Upcoming Week's Liturgical Calendar

Wed 25 Mar: The Annunciation of the Lord

Sun 29 Mar: Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Thanksgiving



Change of Mass Time

Mass will be at 7:30am at St Anthony's Church on Tuesday, 31st March, as the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral is at 10am. All welcome to the Chrism Mass at Cathedral!



Stations of the Cross in Lent after Mass

Holy Cross on Thursdays after 10:00am Mass.

St Joseph's on Fridays after 10:00am Mass.

St Anthony's on Fridays after 9:15am & 7:00pm

Lenten Scripture Reflection

Starting on Monday 23 February, and every Monday thereafter, during Lent from 7-8pm at St Anthony's Church.

Participation During Holy Week

1. We are looking for 12 volunteers, men and women for the 'Washing of the Feet' on Holy Thursday, 2nd April at 7:00pm Mass at Holy Cross Church.
2. We need 14 volunteers to lead the 'Stations of the Cross' on Good Friday, 3rd April at the 10:00am Service at St Joseph's Church. Adults preferred.

Please ring/email the Parish Office or leave your name with our Clergy. Thank you.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (cf. Ps 42:1-2)

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (cf. Jn 11:26)

Everyone who lives and believes in me will not die for ever, says the Lord.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Those who are ill*: Josephine Fogarty

**Names are published for a month, unless further requested.*

Recently Deceased: -

Death Anniversary: Agostinho Sarmento

2026 Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY 28-29 March

St Joseph's - Sat 6:30pm & Sun 10:30am

(Reconciliation Sat 5:30pm)

Holy Cross - Sun 9:00am

(Reconciliation Sun 6:30pm)

HOLY THURSDAY 2 April

Holy Cross - 7:00pm

GOOD FRIDAY 3 April

St Joseph's - Stations of the Cross - 10:00am

St Joseph's - The Passion of Our Lord - 3:00pm

HOLY SATURDAY 4 April

Holy Cross - Easter Vigil Mass - 7:00pm

EASTER SUNDAY 5 April

Holy Cross - 9:00am & 7:00pm (Divine Mercy)

St Joseph's - 10:30am



Image by freepik

3rd Scrutiny of the Elect

Let us keep in our thoughts and prayers, our RCIA Candidates and Catechumens as they proceed to their 3rd Scrutiny at St Joseph's Church this Sunday, 10:30am.

Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal

Sunday, 22nd March after all morning Masses at St Anthony's Church. Please support this worthy cause. Trash and treasure, cake stall, games for the kids. Donations of cakes, biscuits, scones and slices most welcome. Please label your products with all the ingredients and date of preparation.

If you would like to take a collection tin to your workplace please register on the day - ID required. Must be returned the following week. On Good Friday, or during the preceding week, we can collect locally. The Appeal has strict guidelines to comply with. Please contact the Parish Office if you are interested in helping with a collection.

Lenten Eucharistic Adoration Challenge

Start on any day according to your convenience and carry on for 31 consecutive days of Eucharistic Adoration by visiting the Blessed Sacrament e.g. at the Perpetual Adoration Chapel at St Joseph's Church, Elsternwick.

For more info, email angelica.barrios.au@gmail.com or the Parish Office. Pamphlets available in the Church foyer.



Perpetual Adoration Chapel

The Adoration Chapel was built in 2018 to commemorate the Centenary Celebration of St Joseph's Church. The Chapel can be accessed 24/7 with a security tag. Contact the Parish Office to apply. A refundable deposit will be required. Concessions available on application.

Parish Social Lunch

The Camden Hotel - 414 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield South on Wednesday, March 25th at 12.00pm. All welcome to come together over a meal for conversation, fun and friendship.

RSVP: Denise 0410311326 by Monday, 23rd March.

Holy Land Collection - Good Friday 3rd April

The annual collection for the support of the church in the Holy Land will take place on Good Friday, 3rd April 2026. This collection promotes the missionary work of the Church in the Holy Land by providing welfare assistance to local Christians in areas such as health, education, employment and housing. Parishes, schools, orphanages and medical centers throughout the Holy Land also rely on assistance from this collection. It is also used to maintain over 70 churches and shrines associated with the life of Jesus. Due to the Covid pandemic, the war in Gaza and now the war with Iran, recent years have been and continue to be extremely difficult for the Church and people of the Holy Land with much reduced income due to fewer pilgrims and visitors. Last year the Australian Catholics donated \$1.7 million through the Good Friday Collection, a wonderful effort that went a long way to assist the Church of the Holy Land. But this year, the Holy Land continues facing an income shortfall in funds due to the ongoing effects of the Pandemic, the war in Gaza and now the war with Iran, all of which discourage or totally prevent pilgrims coming to the Holy Land.

We again urge Catholics around the world to be as generous as possible. Please remember the Christians of the Holy Land on Good Friday and keep them in your prayers.

Thank you from the Holy Land Commissariat.

Youth & Young Adults Hosting Mass - 28 March

The Young Adults and Youth from our 3 churches will again be hosting the 6:30pm Saturday Vigil Mass on the 4th Saturday of each month at St Joseph's Church.



On Saturday, 28th March, the Vigil Mass will be preceded by Adoration and Confessions starting at 5:30pm at St Joseph's, Elsternwick. The Adoration is an initiative by the ACYF participants, and the Confessions is in preparation to the Holy Week. All welcome!

Day of the Unborn Child - 28th March 2026

Holy Mass in Reparation for and Healing from Abortion on at 9:00am every 4th Saturday at St Patrick's Cathedral.

Confessions from 8:30am. Celebrant: Fr Nathan Rawlins. Rosary Procession after Mass.

Join us in prayer to the edge of the 150m Abortion Prayer Exclusion Zone, Wellington Parade, East Melbourne (Opposite Jolimont Station Ramp Exit). Parking available off Lansdowne Street. Please vacate carpark by 11:30am.

Helpers of God's Precious Infants: Contact 0407 090 367.

5th Sunday of Lent - Raising of Lazarus

At least some of us may have had the experience of being with a dying person. At such times, one would try every possible means to save the person; if finding oneself unable to do so, would take the help of doctors, medicines and even of God. Despite all that, the inevitable might happen. The person whom we loved so dearly, known so closely, is now no more. Our lives had been centered around that person, but not any more. The death of such people would leave a vacuum in the lives of those who are left behind.



Similar must have been the experience of Martha and Mary, when their beloved brother Lazarus was dying. They tried everything they could to save their dear brother. Jesus, the only one who could have been of great help, was not anywhere near. They sent for him, but he decided to stay on where he was. For some reason, Jesus decided not to rush. In our times of great need, we too call upon God, but there are times when God does not seem to hear, does not seem to respond. Then we are seemingly left to ourselves.

In today's Gospel story, even though Jesus did not rush to help and heal Lazarus, yet later on he went and sympathized with the bereaved family. He shared in their deep grief and sorrow. Jesus wept, not to show off, but from his heart. Lazarus was dear to him too. This much was just like anyone else would do; sympathise. But now, he is prepared to do something more than anyone else could do. In fact, Jesus was prepared to do two things.

First, he does something that God alone could do and Jesus does it. He brings his friend back to life. Now, we know as to why Jesus had delayed in coming to the help of Lazarus. "Trust in God's timing, even when it seems delayed" (Habakkuk 2:3)

Second, Jesus was prepared to die instead. He knew very well that the raising of Lazarus would mean his own death. He would do it most willingly, not for the sake of his friend Lazarus only, but for the sake of the whole humanity, for you and me.

For Jesus, each and every one is a friend. To him, everyone is dear. He knows us closely and loves us dearly. He alone is able to save us from dying an eternal death. And that meant his own death and resurrection. He knew that raising of Lazarus would quicken that process.

Fr Leenus.

Q: What did Daniel tell his real estate agent?

A: I'd prefer a house with no den.

Name some of the keys that cannot open any locks!
Monkeys and donkeys!

St Anthony's Church open on Fridays during Lent

This initiative has a two-fold purpose:

To make the church available to more parishioners during Lent and to take a small step on the path of keeping the Church open for daily prayer. Do you recall the days when our church was open every day? There is a need and a hunger in the community. St Anthony's is taking this step to meet it, starting Friday 27th February.

If you are able to commit to a time of personal prayer and be present to keep an eye in the church on Friday afternoon, please contact the Parish Office.



Project Compassion

Project Compassion Boxes are now available in the church foyers. Please take one as well as for anyone who is unable to come to church.

Jesus said:

‘I am the resurrection and the life.
If anyone believes in me, even though he dies
he will live,
and whoever lives and believes in me
will never die.

Do you believe this?

‘Yes, Lord,’ she said ‘I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.’

Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, ‘Where have you put him?’ They said, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept; and the Jews said, ‘See how much he loved him!’ But there were some who remarked, ‘He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man’s death?’ Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, ‘Take the stone away.’ Martha said to him ‘Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.’ Jesus replied ‘Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

‘Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.
I knew indeed that you always hear me.

But I speak

for the sake of all these who stand round me,
so that they may believe it was you who sent me.’

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, here! Come out!’ The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, let him go free.’

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Longer form, 11:1-45

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Breaking Open the Word

OUR SOURCE OF LIFE

As we come to the last Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the central meaning of Jesus’ life—his gift of life. The story involves Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. These are Jesus’ friends who are from the village of Bethany. When Jesus gets the message about Lazarus’ dire illness, strangely, he does not go immediately to be with them but only after two days have passed.

The evangelist’s words at this point link to the story from last Sunday: One ‘can walk in the daytime without stumbling because he has the light of this world to see by.’ It is this Light, Jesus, that then goes to Bethany, to bring the dead Lazarus to life. The interchange that Jesus has with Martha before he comes to Lazarus’ tomb summarises a theology which John wants readers to transcend. Rather than wait for the general resurrection at the end time, Jesus is ‘the resurrection and the life’ now. Faith in him will bring people to life.

Space prevents a detailed examination of the narrative dynamic at play and the depths of the Gospel’s symbolism behind the dialogues, Jesus’ weeping, the various reactions to Jesus, Jesus’ command to Lazarus to come from the tomb and the order to unbind Lazarus. On this final Sunday in Lent our gaze is squarely on Jesus. He is our source of life, now and into eternity. Today’s Gospel invites us into a deeper communion with Jesus, who is ‘the resurrection and the life’.

Fr Michael Trainor