

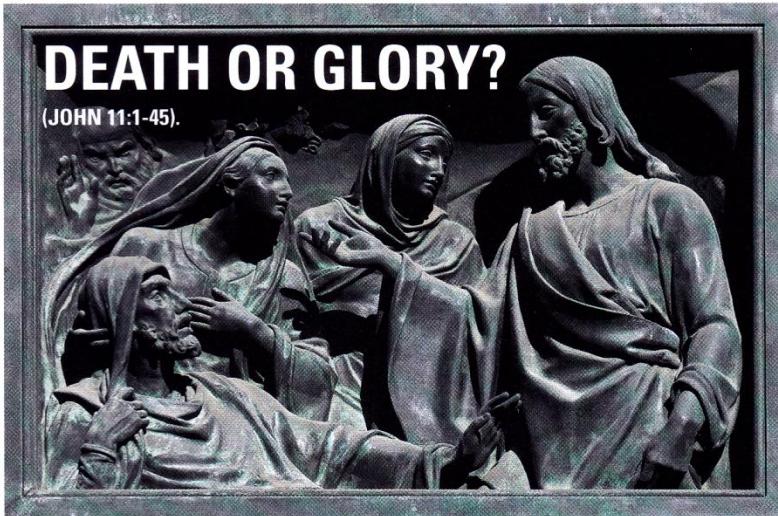
29 MARCH 2020

Sunday Message

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year A • Season Colour: Purple • Psalter Week 1



The raising of Lazarus: fragment of a door in Isaak Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia

The raising of Lazarus is the last and greatest of the signs which Jesus gives. It is also the catalyst which sets in motion the process by which Jesus is brought to the cross.

Jesus knows this and declares that Lazarus' sickness will not end in death but in God's glory and the glorification of Jesus as God's Son. So Jesus does not set out immediately to cure Lazarus of his illness, as he is responding to the will of the Father: the purpose of the sign will not be the restoring of Lazarus to life, but rather that the disciples may come to true faith.

The disciples refer to Jesus as "Rabbi", which suggests that their belief in Jesus is still imperfect. Martha appears in the story as the sister who takes the initiative, going to confront Jesus and stating her belief in the general resurrection of the dead. Jesus tells her that the resurrection is not an event but a person, namely himself. Many scholars see Martha's response to Jesus' question – "Do you believe this?" – as the Johannine equivalent of Peter's confession in the other Gospel accounts. Mary, on the other hand, acts in accordance with the word of Jesus, going to him when he calls her, as the sheep responds to the voice of the shepherd.

In his prayer to the Father, Jesus repeats his statement that the purpose of the sign is to bring those who witness it to believe that Jesus is the one whom God has sent, and as a result, many of the Jews believe in him. ■

REFLECT

Jesus' gift of life to his dead friend is the event which sets off the plot to do away with him. In an additional twist of irony, the Jewish leaders will decide to assassinate Lazarus as well. This is the last of the readings which are given in this time when candidates are preparing to join our community as full members. In it we hear the promise of Jesus that he is, in himself, the resurrection and the life for his disciples. The raising of Lazarus will indeed lead

to the death of Jesus: but for John the evangelist, the crucifixion is a triumph; it is the lifting up, the exaltation of Jesus in glory, it is his hour, the purpose for which he came. The Easter mystery is fulfilled on the cross.

Throughout the narrative, Jesus is presented in a highly emotional state, which is unusual in the Fourth Gospel. His grief and distress may be caused by the death of someone he loved, but also,

SAY

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

(John 11:27)

LEARN

Details of the burial circumstances of Lazarus, such as the stone over the entrance, the cloths around him and over his face, correspond to those of the burial place of Jesus.

The differences are worth noting: the stone rolled away, the cloths on the ground, the face cloth rolled up in a separate place.

These suggest that the two events are radically different: Lazarus is restored to the life he had lost and will have to die again; the resurrection of Jesus is of a different order completely.

DO

Take a piece of cloth in your hands. Think about the sign of the raising of Lazarus. Make an act of faith in Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life for you.



perhaps, by frustration at the obtuseness of those who, like Thomas, keep on misunderstanding the real significance of what he says and does.

When we listen to, or read, the Scriptures, we are invited to make the Word of God relevant to our own faith, our own lives. Which character in the Gospel story do we most resemble? How can we become closer disciples of Jesus? ■

SWINFORD (F12 YH57) MEELICK (F12 AY23) MIDFIELD (F12 AX29)
Fr Dermot Meehan Phone: 094-9251790/Urgent Calls: 087-1338200

PARISH OFFICE- OPENING HOURS: Mon, Thurs, Fri: 9.00am-2.00pm; **Phone:** 094 - 9253607
Email: swinfordparish@gmail.com **Date:** 29th Mar – 5th Apr 2020

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday 29th	12 noon	Swinford: Mona & Martin Tunney, Cloonacannana John & Mary Durkin, Cloonacannana & dec'd Durkin & Gavaghan Families Richard & Pat Gallagher, their parents & dec'd Family, Carrowreagh Michael McNulty, Carnacul Ann & William Murphy, Bothaul & dec'd Murphy, Roache & Killiea Families Frank Brennan & dec'd Family, Castleroyan
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Monday 30th	10.00am	Swinford: No Intention
Tuesday 31st	10.00am	Swinford: No Intention
Wednesday 1st	10.00am	Swinford: No Intention
Thursday 2nd	10.00am	Swinford: No Intention
Friday 3rd	10.00am	Swinford: Joe Cummins, Brabazon Heights
Saturday 4th	10.00am	Swinford: Andrew Kelly, (1st anniv)

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Sunday 5th	12 noon	Swinford: Tom Keville, Circular Road Michael & Delia McNicohlas, their son Tommy & their daughter Helen, Carracanada & Mary & Martin Furey, Manchester Micéal Campbell, Chapel Street Jack & Betsy Campbell & their son Michael, Co Tyrone Pete Murphy, his parents Pete & Delia & Mai, Jim & Jimmy Woodlock Kathleen Kilgallon, Faheens (1 st anniv) William & Bridget Heaney, Midfield & dec'd Gallagher Heaney Families
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While there will be no public Masses this week, the intentions above will be remembered at Mass on the designated day except for Sundays. On Sunday, the intentions for the Vigil Mass, 9a.m. Mass in Meelick, 10.30a.m. Mass in Midfield and the 12 noon Mass in Swinford will be remembered together at 12 noon Mass in Swinford. Though families will not be present, please be assured that your loved ones will be remembered at Mass.

All of the Masses above will be broadcast via live streaming on our webcam at www.Churchservices.tv. Just click on the icon for Swinford Church.

Useful updates and resources available on our diocesan website: www.achonrydiocese.org

In these strange and unprecedented times we continue to place ourselves, our families and all in our parish community under the protection of God who remains our refuge and our strength. We ask the intercession of Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland for our country at this time of uncertainty and anxiety. Many feel isolated in these days because of restrictions on movement and the demands of social distancing but God is with us and we are never alone.

Please continue to pray at home. Families are encouraged to pray familiar prayers, especially the Angelus and the Rosary, as prayer will sustain us and assure us that God is with us. Other resources for prayer in these times are available on our diocesan website, www.achonrydiocese.org/homeprayer.

Mass will continue to be broadcast daily by live streaming from Swinford Church on Sundays at 12 noon and on weekdays at 10.00 a.m. You can find us on www.churchservices.tv. Mass will also be broadcast daily at 10.30 a.m. from St Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny on RTE NEWS NOW (Sky 521, Saorview 21, VM 200 and Eir 500).

Each day at Mass from Swinford Church those participating by live streaming are invited to make an Act of Spiritual Communion. The words of this prayer are:

My Jesus,
I believe that you
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
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. (St
Alphonsus de Liguori)

The churches in the parish will be open every day for anyone who wishes to call in for personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or to light a candle. Swinford Church will be

open on Sunday 1p.m. to 7.30p.m. and on weekdays from 11.00a.m. until 7.30p.m.

Great work is being done in our community to support those who are vulnerable and living alone, ensuring that their daily needs are looked after, including delivery of hot lunches. Heartfelt thanks to all who volunteer to help and support. If anyone needs support at this time please contact Joe Mellett at 087 2573752 or Fr Dermot at 087 1338200. Please be assured, all calls will be confidential.

COVID-19 Support Line for Older People:
ALONE has launched a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Professional staff are available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line is open seven days a week, 8am - 8pm, by calling 0818 222 024.

Updates: The Irish Government introduced new measures on Tuesday of last week to try to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus. In line with these new measures, and having sought clarification from the HSE, the bishops in the west of Ireland produced the following guidelines for parishes:

1. Public Masses on Sundays and weekdays remain suspended until after April 19th.
 2. Funeral Masses may proceed, but physical participation must be limited to immediate family.
 3. Baptisms may proceed, but only parents and godparents can be present for the ceremony.
 4. The Sacrament of Marriage may only be celebrated on the understanding that participation is limited to the couple themselves, their two witnesses and the priest.
 5. First Friday visits are suspended for the duration of the crisis.
 6. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick can take place in cases of emergency.
- It has been difficult to make these decisions but they are made in an effort to balance pastoral needs with government restrictions at this time.