



*Fifth*  
SUNDAY  
IN  
LENT

## **Benefice of the Piddle Valley, Hilton & Ansty, Melcombe Horsey and Cheselbourne**

**Sunday 29th March 2020**

**Passion Sunday - 5th Sunday of Lent**

**Readings:** Ezek. 37: 1-14, Psalm 130, Rom 8: 6-11, John 11: 1-45

**Collect:** Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### **Romans 8:6-11 (ESV) - Life in the Spirit**

For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**COMMENT:** Paul discusses two levels of existence: the physical which will end when our physical resources are exhausted; and the spiritual with the ongoing assurance of eternal life. It is difficult for us who have a relatively comfortable existence with moderately effective support systems to contemplate exactly what Paul meant by this contrast. We find it all too easy "to set our minds on the flesh" and leave whatever lies beyond to theological argument. In many respects, Paul may have been recalling the two ways of life the book Deuteronomy had set before Israel: the way of life and the way of death. But the Deuteronomy emphasized obedience to the law of the covenant as the means of assuring the Israelites a life of security in the land promised to their patriarchal ancestors forever (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). It is here that Paul differed with his ancestral tradition. He had a totally different picture in mind. Life focused only on this world and on satisfying one's natural impulses is the way to the death that is ultimately separation from God. This is the end for those who "set their minds on the flesh." Paul wrote after the resurrection of Christ and Pentecost, when the Spirit the prophet Joel promised would come "in the last days" had actually been "poured out" on the Christian community. As he says in verse 9, "the Spirit of God dwells in you." For him, the Spirit-filled life is full of energy and intimacy with God now and forever. Thus Paul was not dreaming of an other-worldly existence "in the sky by and by." He knew full well that every human life must be lived in the real world. It was the kind of life one lives that is so important to him. This is nothing short of the life of Christ in us made real and effective by the work of the Spirit (verses 10-11). Equally important in Paul's thinking is the empowering action of God, Christ and the Spirit in the life of the ordinary Christian. Nowhere in the New Testament is the activity of what the church subsequently defined as the three Persons of the Trinity more clearly expressed. In this passage the three are virtually interchangeable. Paul goes so far

as to use the two phrases “the Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ” in successive sentences. He had fully comprehended the truth that God acted in Jesus Christ, not only throughout Jesus’ human life and ministry, but especially in raising Jesus from the dead to be the living Christ present to all believers through the Spirit actively changing our lives here and now (verse 11).

### **John 11:1-45 (ESV) - The Death of Lazarus**

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, 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.” The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

### ***I Am the Resurrection and the Life***

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 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 Weeps***

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved[e] 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!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

### ***Jesus Raises Lazarus.***

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 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.

**COMMENT:** The story of the raising of Lazarus is the sixth of seven signs John gives to prove that Jesus is the Messiah/Christ, Son of God, and that through faith in him believers receive eternal life. Even as the event shows Jesus' divine power over death itself, it also shows him as a wonderfully sensitive human being. His love for Lazarus is palpable. Martha's and Mary's accusation that Jesus' presence would have averted Lazarus' death tells how real their friendship was. So also did Jesus' tears. The account, is also John's reflection on the significance of the resurrection. Because Jesus is fully human and fully divine, life and death are his gifts to give.

**Post Communion:** Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. **Amen**

**Blessing:** Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen**

## **Benefice Notices**



**Live Streaming:** Please see attached for daily live streamed services.

**Support Groups:** Thank you to all those who have set up support networks to assist those in our community with shopping, dog walking and prescription collections etc. See attached for details.

**From our Treasurers:** Even though the church doors have been locked, please continue to give to your parish church, by organising a regular standing order. The church treasurer will be able to provide the appropriate account details; email address are below:

Hilton & Ansty : Charles Hunter - [cjhh@hanc1.plus.com](mailto:cjhh@hanc1.plus.com)

Melcombe Horsey: Julie Saunders - [julie@mendipmagic.co.uk](mailto:julie@mendipmagic.co.uk)

Cheselbourne : Jo Nash - [jnash123@btinternet.com](mailto:jnash123@btinternet.com)

Piddlehinton: Andrew Rennison - [andrew\\_rennison@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:andrew_rennison@yahoo.co.uk)

Piddletrenthide: Ginny Butcher - [treasurer.piddletrenthide@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.piddletrenthide@gmail.com)

Alton Pancras: Richard Scott - [richard@drscott.co.uk](mailto:richard@drscott.co.uk)

**Benefice Prayer list:**

In your prayers, please will you pray for our friends and neighbours throughout the benefice. For the sick, the grieving, for our key workers and support groups

For those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit, through illness or recovering from hospital treatment: *Sara Milne, June Kelloway, Ann Lambert, Fay Lord, Richard Hanbury, Geoff Harris, Ruth Tutt, Roger Gray, Bernard, Marion Traynor, Giles Maber and Robyn Kotze.*



Please pray for all our wedding couples, who's services of Holy Matrimony have been put on hold: *James & Ceri, Lauren & Karim, Vicky & David, Giles & Robyn, Ruth & Nick, Lucy & Jake, Ellen & Toby, Tori & Carlo, Hugh & Lucy.*

We continue to pray daily for the many Doctors and Nurses and all NHS staff, those known to us and the many who are not; who are working in extreme conditions in our hospitals, GP Surgeries and in the Community. Lord, we ask that you support them with strength and courage so they may continue to carry out their duties.

Any additions to the prayer list, please email the Rector.

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