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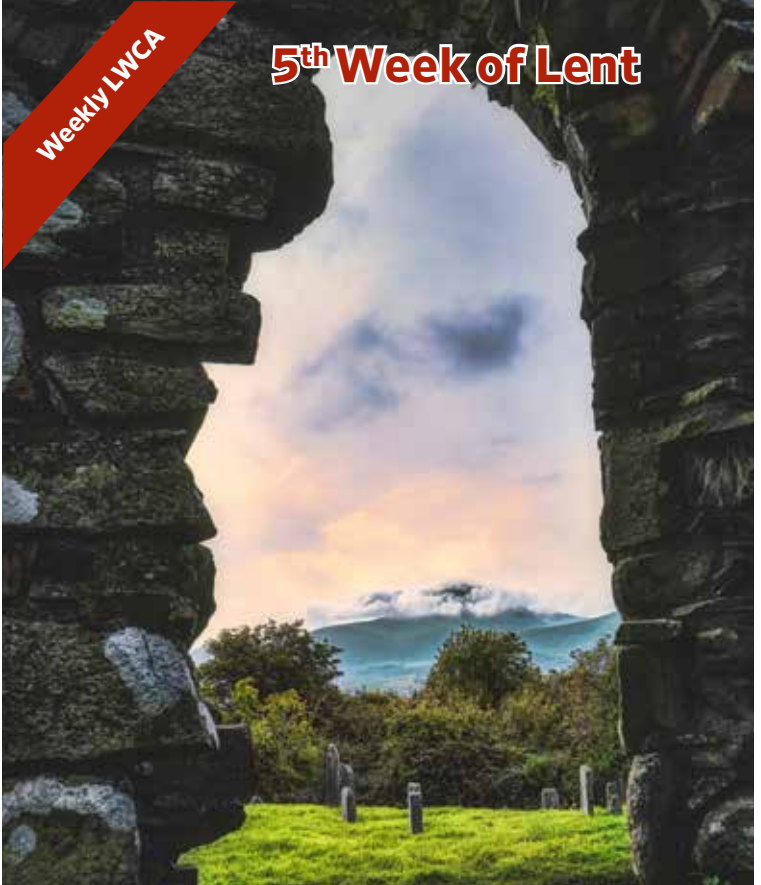
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

5th Week of Lent

byard africque



AFRICA ● 26 March - 1 April 2023 ● Digital n°26

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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: The empty tomb of Lazarus

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Editorial

March-April 2023



Rev. Fr. François Nzanzu, a.a. Nairobi-Kenya

From Death to New Life

Last week we were reflecting on Jesus giving sight to the man born blind and our own need to be healed of any blindness which keeps us from truly recognizing God's gifts to us each day or which keeps us from seeing the needs of others. This weekend we hear the story of Jesus raising to life, Lazarus, his friend. The account shows Jesus life to a particular person in the circumstances of his life and invite us to see ourselves in him and to see God's compassion at work in our lives.

In our reflection this week let us see ourselves like Lazarus, the man from a town whose name, Bethany, means "House of Affliction." The Gospel writer, takes a friendship between Jesus and Lazarus' family and an event that has the quality of reminiscence and shapes it for his theological purposes. Lazarus is the "one Jesus loves". Lazarus represents all those whom Jesus loves, which includes you, I and all humankind. Brethren, as we move into the final weeks of Lent, may our reflection remind us that this is a story not just of Lazarus, but of our own experiences of coming to life out of death, in all the moments of our lives.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For victims of abuse: We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

Other papal intentions and videos can be found on: <http://apostleshipofprayer.org/>

The Holy Mass: Introduction

The Holy Mass begins with the sign of the cross during the initial rites and ends with the sign of the cross during the concluding rites. However, before the first sign of the cross, the faithful already prepare for Holy Mass from their respective homes, and at the end of the Mass, the celebrant sends the faithful on mission. In this regard, the faithful are invited to live according to the Word of God that they have heard and to be the living sacrifice that they have participated in. That is the reason why the prayer after communion often creates a link between the Eucharistic celebration and real life. As an example, the prayer after communion of the fifth Sunday in the Ordinary Time, Year A says this: *O God, who have willed that we be partakers in the one Bread and the one Chalice, grant us, we pray, so to live that, made one in Christ, we may joyfully bear fruit for the salvation of the world.*

The Holy Mass is composed of two parts: The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The two parts are linked. In fact, the Word that the faithful hear in the first part is the same Word that becomes flesh in

the second part. For this reason, the faithful are invited to participate in the entire Mass. It is worth saying that the second part of Holy Mass can never be celebrated without the first. In other words, the Liturgy of the Eucharist cannot stand on its own. It is the continuation of the first part. On the contrary, the first part can be celebrated without the second. This is the case of the celebration of the Word without a priest.

As in every liturgical celebration, during Holy Mass, it is God who speaks to us. He is the one who takes the initiative. We just respond to his call. The Holy Mass should not, therefore, be reduced to a mere external ceremony. But it is, as Pope Francis likes to say, the encounter between God and his people. In fact, the two major liturgical actors are Christ and the Church.

The Eucharist brings us together as one people. All our differences (tribes, races, preferences, etc.) disappear because we are all children of God. Indeed, the purpose of the Eucharist is unity as stated in the Missal: *“Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit”*. In this perspective, the faithful who participate in Holy Mass

should be aware that they belong to one people: The People of God.

In a Eucharistic celebration, it is necessary to use the official texts. The Church always provides liturgical books for the people celebrating to use. To invent personal texts and use them in the Eucharistic celebration is to go against the Church's prescriptions. Although we are one people, in the celebration of the Eucharist each of us plays his own role. In fact, there are different ministers: the priest, the deacon, the altar servers, the readers, the choir, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the assembly, etc.

In traditional African cultures, people made sacrifices for various reasons: recognition of the greatness of the gods, request for a good harvest, request for health, protection against evil spirits and bad weather, etc. When the missionaries arrived, they christianized some of the traditional practices. African Christians understand that the Mass is a sacrifice offered to God to glorify him and for their own sanctification.

Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,
Kinshasa, D.R. Congo



Sunday March 26

5th Sunday of Lent

*Ezekiel. 37:12-14 / Psalm 130: 1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8 / Romans. 8:8-11 /
John. 11:1-45*



"If you believe, you will see the glory of God." (Jn 11, 1-45)



Those who Believe in Me, will Live.

Today we are entering the fifth and last week of Lent that is followed by Palm Sunday and finally the Holy Week that will reach its peak on Easter Sunday. From the first reading, we hear of God's promise to bring us back to the land of Israel, open up our graves, rise us up from our graves and put His Spirit within us so to know that He is the Lord God. Jesus says; "Those who believe in Him, although they physically die, they will live". This promise reminds us of the belief that, our physical bodies shall all be raised one day as our faith teaches us. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds us that the life of God in us, is the Holy Spirit. He tells us that even in the face of bodily death our spirit is alive, the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, and will give life to our mortal bodies.

In the Gospel, Jesus reveals to Martha that all are destined for eternal life, that death is only a transition and not the end because Jesus says, "I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life". When we mourn our loved ones, it is because we have lost something. But our mourning is in faith and we believe that they have gone home to a God who loves



Sunday March 26

them. But, with Jesus, mourning is for the fact that this world is a rough and a cruel place thus, people's lives are full of challenges. The Gospel reminds us that, God loves us so much that He allows His only Son to take on the pain of us, because only through the Incarnation could the pain of our daily existence be experienced by God Himself. We were created for life thus, we must put our faith in love with each other thus, no trouble to understand the words of Jesus, "I am the light of the world". As light, he will help us overcome the troubles of life and be able to rejoice and praise God for the great things in life for He is with us and thus, we must turn to him in faith.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



Entrance Antiphon (*Ps (42) 43:1-2*)

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.

Collect

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Ezekiel 37:12-14*)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken, and I have done it, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Sunday March 26

Responsorial Psalm _____
(Psalm (129) 130:1-2.3-4.5-7a.7b-8)



R. With the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption.

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

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But with you is found forgiveness, that you may be revered. **R.**

I long for you, O Lord, my soul longs for his word. My soul hopes in the Lord more than watchmen for daybreak. More than watchmen for daybreak, let Israel hope for the Lord. **R.**



For with the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption. It is he who will redeem Israel from its all iniquities. R.

Second Reading (Romans 8:8-11) _____

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brethren: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive 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 give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (John 11:25a-26)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord: he who believes in me shall never die. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**



Sunday March 26

Gospel (John 11:1-45)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: 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 is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." *

The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." 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 is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."* 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.

*When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And 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 at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever 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, he who is coming into the world." *

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "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 to 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, supporting that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, 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 came with her also weeping, *he was deeply moved in spirit and 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 have kept this man from dying?” Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon 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 odour, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you would believe 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 heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that you have sent me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, 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 he did, believed in him. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. ***

Shorter for: John 11:3-7.17.20-27.33b-45. Read between*.

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, called to serve all nations, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

For open and ongoing dialogue between nations, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

For those who suffer persecution and loneliness, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

For us, called in baptism to be prophets of God’s word, we pray to the Lord: **R.**



Sunday March 26

Prayer over the Offerings

Hear us, almighty God, and having instilled in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon (*Jn 11:26*)

All who live and believe in me will never die, says the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**



Monday March 27

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (55) 56:2) **Have mercy on me, O God, for people assail me; they fight me all day long and oppress me.**

Collect

O God, by whose wondrous grace we are enriched with every blessing, grant us so to pass from former ways to newness of life, that we may be made ready for the glory of the heavenly Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Daniel 13:1-9.15-17.19-30.33-62)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

In those days: There was a man living in Babylon whose name was Joakim. And he took a wife name Susanna, the daughter of Hilkiyah, a very beautiful woman and one who feared the Lord. Her parents were righteous, and had taught their daughter according to the law of Moses. Joakim was a very rich, and had a spacious garden adjoining his house; and the Jews used to come

to him because he was the most honoured of them all. In that year two elders from the people were appointed as judges. Concerning them the Lord had said: “Iniquity came forth from Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people.” These men were frequently at Joachim’s house, and all who had suits at law came to them. When the people departed at noon, Susana would go into her husband’s garden to walk. The two elders used to see her every day, going in and walking about, and they began to desire her. And they perverted their minds and turned away their eyes from looking to Heaven or remembering righteous judgements.

Once, while they are watching for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids, and wished to bathe in the garden, for it was very hot. And no one was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her. She said to her maids, ‘Bring me oil and ointments, and shut the garden doors so that I may bathe.’

When the maids had gone out, the two elders rose and ran to her, and said: “Look, the garden doors are shut, no one sees us, and we are in love with you, so give your consent, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away.”

Susanna sighed deeply, and said, “I am hemmed in on every side. For if I do this thing, it is death for me; and if I do not, I shall not escape your hands. I choose not to do it and to fall into your hands rather than to sin in the sight of the Lord.” Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and the two elders shouted against her. And one of them ran and opened the garden doors. When the household servants heard the shouting in the garden, they rushed in at the side door to see what had happened to her. And when the elders told their tale, the servants were greatly ashamed, for nothing like this had ever been said about Susanna.

The next day, when the people gathered at the house of her husband Joakim, the

two elders came, full of their wicked plot to have Susanna put to death. They said before the people, “Send for Susanna, the daughter of Hilkiyah, who is the wife of Joakim.” So they sent for her. And she came, with her parents, her children, and all her kindred. But her family and friends and all who saw her wept.

Then the two elders stood up in the midst of the people, and laid their hands upon her head. And she, weeping, looked up towards heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord; The elders said, “As we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, shut the garden doors, and dismissed the maids. Then a young man, who had been hidden, came to her and lay with

her. We were in a corner of the garden, and when we saw this wickedness we ran to them. We saw them embracing, but we could not hold the man, for he was too strong for us, and he opened the doors and dashed out. So we seized this woman and asked her who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things we testify.”

[Beginning of the short reading] Daniel (13:41c-62)

The assembly believed in them, because they were elders of the people and judges; and they condemned her to death.

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, “O eternal God, who discern what is secret, who are aware of all things before they

come to be, you know that these men have borne false witness against me. And now, I am to die! Yet I have done none of the things that they have wickedly invented against me!” The Lord heard her cry. And as she was being led away to be put to death God aroused the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel; and he cried with a loud voice, “I am innocent of the blood of this woman.” All the people turned to him, and said, “What is this that you have said?” Taking his stand in the midst of them, he said, “Are you such fools, you sons of Israel? Have you condemned a daughter of Israel without examination and without learning the facts? Return to the place of judgement. For these men

have borne false witness against her.”

Then all the people returned in haste. And the elders said to him, “Come, sit among us and inform us, for God has given you that right.” And Daniel said to them, “Separate them far from each other, and I will examine them. When they were separated from each other, he summoned one of them and said to him, “You are relic of wicked days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, pronouncing unjust judgements, condemning the innocent and letting the guilty go free, though the Lord said, ‘Do not put to death an innocent and righteous person.’ Now then, if you really saw her, tell me this: Under what tree you see

them being intimate with each other?” He answered, “Under a mastic tree.” And Daniel said, “Very well! You lied against your own head, for the angel of God has received the sentence from God and will immediately cut you in two.” Then he put him aside, and commanded them to bring the other. And he said to him, “You offspring of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty has deceived you and lust has perverted your heart. This is how you both have been dealing with the daughters of Israel, and they were intimate with you through fear; but a daughter of Judah would not endure your wickedness. Now then, tell me: Under what tree did you catch them being intimate with each other?” he answered, “Under an

evergreen oak.” And Daniel said to him, “Very well! You also have lied against your own head, for the angel of God is waiting with his sword to saw you in two, that he may destroy you both”.

Then all the assembly shouted loudly and blessed God, who saves those who hope in him. And they rose against the two elders, for out of their own mouths Daniel had convicted them of bearing false witness; and they did to them as they had wickedly planned to do to their neighbour; acting in accordance with the law of Moses, they put them to death. Thus the innocent blood was saved that day. *[End of the short reading]*

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm—
(Psalm (22) 23:1-3a.3b-4.5.6)

R. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of the death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me; he revives my soul. R.

He guides me along the right path, for the sake of his name. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of the death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. R.

You have prepared a table before me in the sight of

my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. R.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending. R.

Acclamation
(Ezekiel 33:11)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord, but that he turn from his way and live. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel —————
(John 8:1-11)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came

again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in their midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law of Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote with

his finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that preparing to celebrate

the holy mysteries, we may bring before you as the fruit of the bodily penance, a joyful purity of heart.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Jn 8:10-11) **Has no one condemned you, woman? No one, Lord. Neither shall I condemn you. From now on, sin no more.**

Prayer after Communion

Strengthened by the blessing of you Sacraments, we pray, O Lord, that through them we may constantly be cleansed of our faults and, by following



Christ, hasten our steps Through Christ our Lord.
upward towards you. **Amen.**

Neither Do I Condemn You

Commentary

John 8: 1-11

In our today's Gospel, we reflect on a story of a woman who was caught in the act of adultery and was taken to Jesus accused of breaking the law. The Scribes and Pharisees turn out to be guilty of their acts. A similar event happens to Susanna. The two scenarios remind us of being firm till the end for even if we walk the valley of darkness and with faith, God will not abandon us to shame.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



Tuesday March 28

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (26) 27:14) **Wait for the Lord; be strong; be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord!**

Collect

Grant us, we pray, O Lord, perseverance in obeying your will, that in our days the people dedicated to your service may grow in both merit and number. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Numbers 21:4-9)

A reading from the Book of Numbers

In those days: From Mount Hor the Hebrews set out by the way to Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” Then the Lord sent



fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it up as a sign; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it up as a sign; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm—
(Psalm ⁽¹⁰¹⁾ 102:1-2.15-17.18-20)

**R. O Lord, hear my prayer,
and let my cry come to you**

O Lord, hear my prayer,
and let my cry come to you.
Do not hide you face from
me in the day of my distress.
Turn your ear towards me;
on the day when I call,
speedily answer me. R.

The nations shall fear the
name of the Lord, and all
the earth's kings your glo-ry.
When the Lord shall build
up Sion, he will appear in
all his glory. Then he will
turn to the prayers of the
helpless; he will not despise
their prayers. R.

Let this be written for the
ages to come, that a people
yet unborn may praise the
Lord; the Lord looked down

from his holy place on high, looked down from heaven to the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, and free those condemned to die. R

Acclamation

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. The seed is the word of God, and the sower is Christ; all who find him will abide for ever. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel _____ **(John 8:21-30)**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus said to the Pharisees, “I go away, and you will seek me and die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.”

Then said the Jews, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Even what I have told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge; but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I



do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.” As he spoke thus, many believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

We offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation,

that being moved to compassion, you may both pardon our offences and direct our wavering hearts. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Jn 12:32) **When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself, says the Lord.**

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that ever seeking what is divine, we may always be

worthy to approach these heavenly gifts. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Commentary

Following Christ

John 8:21-30

In today's Gospel, Jesus says: "I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me". Here Jesus is using the image of an ambassador that He represents His Father to the world and to us. We Christians and as Christ's ambassadors, need to remember that, what we say and do, it's not for our own use but for the growth of the Kingdom of God so that God may be known to all. For this to happen, we need to live a good life as Christians.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



Wednesday March 29

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (17) 18:48-49) My deliverer from angry nations, you set me above my assailants; you saved me from the violent man, O Lord.

Collect

Enlighten, O God of compassion, the hearts of your children, sanctified by penance, and in your kindness grant those you stir to a sense of devotion, a gracious hearing when they cry out to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Daniel 3:14-20.24-25.28)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

In those days: King Nebuchadnezzar said, “It is true, O Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good;

but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?” Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego answered the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego.

He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was accustomed to be heated. And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counsellors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered the king, “True, O king.” He answered, “But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.” Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, who has sent

his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set at nought the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Daniel 3:29-30. 31.33. 32.34)

R. You are to be praised and highly exalted for ever.

Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers, and to be praised and highly exalted for ever; And blessed is your glorious, holy name and to be highly praised and highly exalted for ever. R.

Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory and to be extolled and highly glorified for ever. R.

Blessed are you upon the throne of your kingdom and to be extolled and highly glorified for ever. R.

Blessed are you, who sit upon cherubim and look upon the deeps, and to be praised and highly exalted for ever. R.

Blessed are you in the firmament of the heaven and to be sung and glorified for ever. R.

Acclamation *(Luke 8:15)*
Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Blessed are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit

with patience. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel —————
(John 8:31-42)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to any one. How is it that you say, ‘You will be made free?’” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not continue

in the house for ever; the son continues for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did. You do the works of your father.” They said to him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.” Jesus said to them, “If God

were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive back, O Lord, these sacrificial offerings which you have given to be offered to the honour

of your name, and grant that they may become remedies for our healing. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Col 1:13-14) **God has brought us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.**

Prayer after Communion

May the mysteries we have received, O Lord, bring us heavenly medicine, that they may purge all evil from

our heart and strengthen us with eternal protection. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

You will Be Made Free**Commentary****John 8:31-42**

Jesus is telling us in today's gospel: "And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." The truth is that all of us are children of God for we are created in His image and likeness and that, we are capable of knowing the truth and freely ordering our lives towards the good. This is possible if we will reliably follow the Lord and obey his word, entrusting our lives to Him and submitting to him without reserve in a personal relationship.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



Thursday March 30

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 9:15) **Christ is mediator of a New Covenant, so that by means of his death, those who are called may receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.**

Collect

Be near, O Lord, to those who plead before you, and look kindly on those who place their hope in your mercy, that, cleansed from the stain of their sins, they may preserve in holy living and be made full heirs of your promise. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Genesis 17:3-9)

A reading from the Book of Genesis

In those days: Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you.

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ 105:
4-5.6-7.8-9)

R. The Lord remembers his covenant forever.

Turn to the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face. Remember the wonders he has done, his marvels and his words of judgement. R.

O children of Abraham, his servant, O descendants of the Jacob he chose, he, the Lord, is our God; his judgements are in all the earth. R.

He remembers his covenant forever: the promise he ordained for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. R.

Acclamation (*Psalm (94)*
95:7d.8a)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Today, harden not your hearts, but listen to the voice of the Lord. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel —————
(John 8:51-59)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to the Jews “Truly, truly, I say to you, if any one keeps my word, he will never see death.” The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets; and you say, ‘If any one keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our

father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you claim to be?” Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God. But you have not known him; I know him. If I said, I do not know him, I should be a liar like you; but I do know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” The Jews then said to him, “You have not fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple. The Gospel

of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Look with favour, Lord, we pray, on these sacrificial offerings, that they may profit our conversion and the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Rom 8:32) **God did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all; with him, he has given us all things.**

Prayer after Communion

Nourished by your saving gifts, we beseech your mercy, Lord, that by this same Sacrament with



which you feed us in the present age, you may make us partakers of the life eternal. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Life in Jesus

Commentary

John 8:51-59

Today's Gospel talks about one of Jesus' identity of His promise that, anyone who keeps His word will never die. Through Christ, God offers us an unbreakable covenant of love which Jesus came to fulfill so that we could know the living God and be united with him. It is God who gives us the gift of faith and understanding so that we may grow in the knowledge of what he has accomplished for us through his Son, Jesus Christ. Ours is to live according to His word.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



Friday March 31

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (30) 31:10.16.18) **Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in distress. Deliver me from the hands of my enemies and those who pursue me. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you.**

Collect

Pardon the offences of your peoples, we pray, O Lord, and in your goodness set us free from the bonds of the sins we have committed in our weakness. Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, who in this season give your Church the grace to imitate devoutly the Blessed Virgin Mary in contemplating the Passion of Christ, grant, we pray, through her intercession, that we may cling more firmly each day to your Only Begotten Son and come at last to the fullness of his grace. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God for ever and ever. **Amen**

Or:

Reading _____
(Jeremiah 20:10-13)

A reading from the Book of Jeremiah

I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” say all my familiar friends, watching for my fall. “Perhaps he will be deceived, then we can overcome him, and take our revenge on him.” But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonour will never be forgotten. O Lord of hosts, who test the righteous, who see the heart and the mind, let me

see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm _____
(Psalm ⁽¹⁷⁾ 18:1-2a.2bc-3.4-5.6)

R. In my anguish I called to the Lord, and he heard me.

I love you, Lord, my strength; O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my saviour. R

My God, my rock where I take refuge; my shield, my saving strength, my stronghold. I cry out, “Praised be the Lord!” and

see, I am saved from my foes. R

The waves of death rose about me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the snares of the grave surrounded me; the traps of the death confronted me. R

In my anguish I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry to him reached his ears. R

Acclamation

(Jn 6.63c.68.c)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; you have the words of eternal life. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel ————— *(John 10:31-42)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: The Jews took up stones to stone Jesus. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?” the Jews answered him, “We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and Scripture cannot be nullified), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You

are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John at first baptised, and there he remained. And many came to him; and they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many believed in him there.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, O merciful God, that we may be worthy to serve ever fittingly at your altars, and there to be saved by constant participation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(1 Pt 2:24) **Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that dead to sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed.**

Prayer after Communion

May the unfailing protection of the sacrifice we have received never leave us, O Lord, and may

it always drive far from us all that would do us harm. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God Will Prevail

Commentary

Jeremiah 20:1-13
John 10:31-42

Our first reading today tells us about Jeremiah who suffers persecution even from his own friends. In the gospel Jesus faces the same situation. Jeremiah expects God to revenge against the wicked people, but Jesus prays not for revenge but He brings redemption and salvation to those who persecute Him. We ask ourselves; do we have the same tendency of accusing others? We pray for the grace to change our hearts to see the hope of Christ in our lives.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



Saturday April 1

5th week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

O Lord, do not stay afar off;
my strength, make haste to
help me! For I am a worm
and no man, scorned by
everyone, despised by the
people.

Collect

O God, who have made
all those reborn in Christ
a chosen race and a royal
priesthood, grant us, we
pray, the grace to will and
to do what you command,
that the people called to
eternal life may be one in
the faith of their hearts
and the homage of their
deeds. Through Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Ezekiel 37:21-28)

A reading from the Book of
Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord God:
“Behold, I take the sons
of Israel from the nations
among which they have
gone, and will gather them
from all sides, and bring
them to their own land;
and I will make them one
nation in the land, upon
the mountains of Israel; and
one king shall be king over
them all; and they shall be
no longer two nations, and
no longer divided into two
kingdoms. They shall not
defile themselves any more

with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. “My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt that I gave to my servant Jacob; they and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there for ever; and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with

them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Responsorial Psalm
(Jeremiah 31:10.11.12ab.13)*

R. The Lord will keep us, as a shepherd keeps his flock.

Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the islands afar off; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather

him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.” R

For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Sion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord. R

They shall the maidens rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. R

Acclamation
(Ezekiel 18:31)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Cast away from you

all the transgressions which you have committed, says the Lord, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ

Gospel _____
(John 11:45-57)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Many of the Jews who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him; but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council, and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, every one will believe in him, and

the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.” But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.” He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they took counsel about how to put him to death. Jesus therefore no longer went about openly

among the Jews, but went from there to the country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim; and there he stayed with the disciples. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?” Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was, he should let them know; so that they might arrest him. The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

May the gifts we offer from our fasting be acceptable to you, O Lord, we pray, and, as an expiation for our sins, may they make us worthy of your grace and lead us to what you promise for the eternity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Jn 11:52) **Christ was handed over, to gather into one the scattered children of God.**

Prayer after Communion

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that, as you feed us with the nourishment which comes

from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, so you may make us sharers of

his divine nature. Who lives and reigns. **Amen.**

Commentary

The Plot to Kill Jesus

John 11:45-57

In today's gospel, we see Jesus' enemies set to kill Him. Their basis for doing so is the word of the Chief Priest, Caiaphas to stop the people from believing in Jesus. Do we allow fear or opposition to hold us back from doing God's will? We need to know that living a Christian life is acting always in love for our brothers and sisters. We must strive to strengthen our faith and their faith too, in order to bear fruits in our lives.

Rev. Sr. Mary Nzilani, Nairobi, Kenya



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Digital

ISSN: 2424-7464; **Contact:** Living With Christ

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