

Fifth Sunday in Lent  
Sunday, April 6, 2025

### **Introduction to the day**

Our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading Paul recalls his transformation from the persecutor Saul into an apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:16-21**

A reading from Isaiah.

*The prophet declares that long ago God performed mighty deeds and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage through the waters of the sea. Now, God is about to do a new thing, bringing the exiles out of Babylon and through the wilderness in a new Exodus.*

### **PSALM: Psalm 126**

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy. (Ps. 126:5)

### **SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14**

A reading from Philippians.

*Writing to Christians in Philippi, Paul admits that his heritage and reputation could give him more reason than most people to place confidence in his spiritual pedigree. But the overwhelming grace of God in Jesus calls Paul to a new set of values.*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 103) (play the tune)**

**Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.**

**Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.**

### **GOSPEL: John 12:1-8**

The holy gospel according to John.

*Judas willfully misinterprets as waste Mary's extravagant act of anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume. Jesus recognizes that her lavish gift is both an expression of love and an anticipation of his burial.*

### **FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT - Instead, You Could Have . . .**

Not another book of the Bible talks about love the way John talks about love. Even if a person doesn't know another thing about this gospel, never went to vacation Bible school, sang a hymn, sat in a pew, or stared at a stained-glass window, chances are good they will perk up at familiar echoes of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world."

Love is leaking out of this gospel book like water from a hose with no gasket, and who knows where it all goes? "I love you, you should love me," Jesus says. And love one another too—colleagues and culprits, defamers and defenders, the near and the far, bullies, bandits, and bores. "Love." It is Jesus' nonnegotiable command. So you'd expect that the hangers-on, the stick-arounds, the learners and leaders and even the laggards-behind whose names and faces and brief bios show up in John's chapters would be specialists in the art of loving.

Some of those gospel characters were together one night in Bethany, a little village just over the hills from Jerusalem. A dinner (it was holiday time) was being hosted in the home of Jesus' friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. But the festive gathering was menaced. They were on edge in the intimacy of the room. Uneasiness stirred in the streets, rebels' causes brewed in shadows and braved daylight. Rumors and plots swirled as they do in troubled times—times that ignore commands, are deaf to pleas, and mislay impulses to love.

When love does not know what to do or how to act; when it struggles with itself and feels imperfect or too thin, unfinished and inadequate; when the campaigns and monuments and funds and meals and letters seem not enough . . . look at Mary. She leads the way by kneeling at the feet of love itself. There we find the path toward love.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

The church declares your praise, O God. Guide us in the example of Isaiah's imagination, Paul's transformed identity, and Mary's faith and devotion; that our lives, too, may be poured out in love as we trust in your promises. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

The earth declares your praise, O God. Make a way for the planet's future in the sea and the wilderness, the mountains and plains, the tundra and wetlands. Repair habitats and sustainable ecosystems on, above, and beneath the ground. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

The nations declare your praise, O God. Where religious differences divide, bring together those who worship you in the name of Jesus Christ and those who call to you with different names. Guide interreligious dialogue, that faith may unite rather than divide communities. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

The people declare your praise, O God. Restore those whose hope has been dampened through a health diagnosis, job or home loss, divorce, or death. Bring healing to those in need especially Linda Boland, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. May all who weep now sing songs of joy again. In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

The gifts of the Spirit declare your praise, O God. We thank you for artists who proclaim the gospel. Inspire music, poetry, and images that proclaim the new thing you are doing. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

The communion of saints declares your praise, O God. Giving thanks for those who have died, we trust in the one who has made them his own: Christ Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.  
**Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 112)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**BLESSING (ELW p. 114)**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 115)**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

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