

# SUNDAY *Plus*

5th Sunday of Lent **Divine Office Week I** Year A

With shouts of glee the children filled the boat. The soldiers ferried them rapidly to the other side. They returned and more of the children piled in. On the third journey the soldier helped the foreign woman into the boat with the last group of children. His platoon had gathered around to help. As the boat moved away from the bank, he called his men to attention and gravely saluted. He called, "Good luck, foreigner!"...

He turned to walk back along the bank to his platoon... It was curious about that foreigner. If this had been close to a large city or a settlement, he could have understood it but wandering across a battlefield escorting an army of ragged Chinese children: that was, indeed, very curious.

They found a village two or three miles from the bank of the Yellow River and the people were hospitable to them. Although many hundreds of refugees had passed through, they still found food to spare for the children...

It was just as well, thought Gladys wearily, that they [the

## To rescue the children


children] didn't worry about where the next meal was coming from.

They stayed in the village only long enough to finish the food and then moved on... They spent that night in the fields and went on again next morning to the town of Mien Chu. It, too, had been badly bombed, but an old woman directed her to a refugee organisation. She found it in the old temple; there were cauldrons of steaming food; they were made welcome.

Alan Burgess, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*

Image: Gladys Aylward with some of the children before they crossed the mountains to Sian © wikipedia.com



Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief. Give eternal rest to the people whom I've known and loved and who have gone home to you.  Amen.

### New directions

To save his friend Lazarus from dying of his sickness would have been miracle enough, but Jesus needed to go further...

It can also have, for us, a personal meaning... All too quickly can we think that there is nothing much we can do: "I'm just like that." We may want to be better but feel a change of life is simply beyond us. Remember Lazarus was dead,

decaying, buried. Yet Jesus could call him forth into a newness of life at will. Never think that our own will alone can make significant changes. Habits and weaknesses bind us fast. But the whole point of being a Christian is that it is not on ourselves that we rely. It is God who wills goodness for us and God who will achieve it in us. All we have to do is ask and, like the dead Lazarus, let God make everything different.

Sr Wendy, *The Art of Faith*

Let us pray that we can grow in humanity, so that our relationships may be truer and richer in compassion. Let us ask the Heart of Jesus for the grace increasingly to have the same feelings as him.

Pope Leo XIV

### READINGS

Today:  
Ezekiel 37:12-14  
Romans 8:8-11  
John 11:1-45

Monday:  
Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17,  
19-30, 33-62  
John 8:1-11

Tuesday:  
Numbers 21:4-9  
John 8:21-30


Wednesday:  
Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10  
Hebrews 10:4-10  
Luke 1:26-38

Thursday:  
Genesis 17:3-9  
John 8:51-59

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

Saturday:  
Ezekiel 37:21-28  
John 11:45-56

Next Sunday:  
Isaiah 50:4-7  
Philippians 2:6-11  
Matthew 26:14 - 27:66

  
Feast of the week  
Wednesday 25 March  
Annunciation of the Lord  
Annunciation carol

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
With wings as drifted snow,  
with eyes as flame:

"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

"For know, a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honour thee;  
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.

"My soul shall laud and magnify  
God's holy name."  
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

Sabine Baring-Gould