

**22 March 2026**  
**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A**

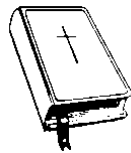


**ALEXANDRA  
 CATHOLIC  
 PASTORAL AREA**  
 [St John the Baptist  
 (1924) Alexandra;  
**St Peter's**  
 (1928) Omakau;  
**St Dunstan's**  
 (1903) Clyde;  
**St Patrick's**  
 (1892) St Bathans;  
**Our Lady of Peace**  
 (1910) Roxburgh]

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**THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS**

(1) **Ezekiel 37:12-14.** At the darkest moment of Israel's history, as hopeless exiles in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel foretells of a rebirth of Israel as a nation in the Promised Land. However, reading his prophecy in the light of the biblical revelation as a whole, the Church has always understood the prophecy to be a promise of personal resurrection through the Spirit of God.



(2) **Romans 8:8-11.** Paul considers how the Spirit of the Risen Christ is already in us and is empowering us, but our bodies are not yet transformed as they will be in the final resurrection. It remains only for this risen life to be revealed with Christ in glory (Colossians 2.12; 3.4).

(3) **John 11:3-7,17,20-27,33-45.** The account of Jesus' gift of life to his friend Lazarus is not the same as the gift of life to us by Jesus in the resurrection, for Lazarus returns to ordinary human life, and will die again, whereas the Christian resurrection transforms us into a new way of life, giving us a life which is a participation in the divine life.

The raising of Lazarus discloses both the divine and the real human love of Jesus for his friends. He weeps for Lazarus, and so suffers our sorrows too.

**NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS (Palm Sunday)**

- (1) At entrance of churches: **Matthew 21:1-11**
- (2) **Isaiah 50:4-7** (3) **Philippians 2:6-11**
- (4) **Matthew 27:11-54**

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**Died Recently:**

**Anniversaries about now:** Tracy Ashby (UK); Avis Campbell-Dyson; William Welnoski; Elizabeth McKilve OP; Herbert and Betty Williams.

***'May they rest in peace.'***

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**MASS THIS COMING WEDNESDAY,**  
**ALEXANDRA** will commence 9:10am with St Gerard's Primary children and staff.

**HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICE TIMES**

\***Reconciliation:** Tuesday 31 March, Alexandra church, 7-8pm. Frs' Pat McGettigan & Brendan Ward, plus another if possible. Rite I.

\***Chrism Mass:** St Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, Wednesday 01 April, 11am.

\***Holy Thursday Mass of the Last Supper:** Thursday 02 April, Alexandra church, 7pm. NB: No 9am Mass.

\***Good Friday (The Passion of the Lord):** 3pm at both Alexandra and Roxburgh churches.

\***Easter Vigil (The Service of Light):** Saturday 04 April, 8pm at Omakau and 8pm at Roxburgh.

\***Easter Sunday:** 9am Alexandra. (NB: No 11am Mass at Roxburgh)

**Easter Vigil 'Service of Light' Mass:** NB: Note the change from 7:30pm to 8pm for the Mass at Omakau. *Why?*

The ORDO is the book of rituals published by the Holy See, specifying norms around liturgical practice. It states: *'The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall. It is an abuse to begin before it is dark.'* Because Daylight Saving does not finish until early Sunday morning on the 5<sup>th</sup> April, it won't be dark until about 7:55pm the Saturday evening before.

Why the emphasis on it being dark for the Easter Vigil? Because the Vigil commences with the lighting of the Easter fire and of the Easter candle, the symbol of the risen Christ, from the fire. i.e. To light the fire and candle before it is dark undermines their symbolism, which points to Christ as *"the light of the world"* (John 8:12). Other related passages include:

*"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light"* (Matt 4:16);

*"The dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death"* (Luke 1:78-79);

*"He was transfigured and his face shone like the sun"* (Matthew 17: ... );

He is *"the radiance of God's glory."* (Heb 1:3);

*"You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be the children of light"* (Eph 5:8);

*"I have come into the world so that those without sight may see"* (John 9:40).

**COMBINED INTER-CHURCHES SERVICES:**

\***Good Friday Walk:** A self-guided contemplative prayer walk (booklet provided) around stations of the cross at the Salvation Army centre, 37 Royal Terrace, Alexandra, any time from 9am to 1pm.

\***Easter Sunday Sunrise Service:** 7am, Alexandra lookout, Little Valley Road.

**ST GERARD'S SCHOOL NEWS**

**-Roxburgh Dam tour - A PTA fundraiser:** Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>. \$20 per person or \$30 per family. Contact Jen McLean 021270076, or Nathan McLean 021560166 to secure a spot.

