



St. John's Parish
Roman Catholic Church

office@stjohnskitchener.ca

519 745 7855

85 Strange St., Kitchener

A DEAR FRIEND OF JESUS

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 22, 2026

Today, the fifth Sunday of Lent, the Gospel presents to us the resurrection of Lazarus (*cf. Jn 11:1-45*). It is the last of Jesus' miracles narrated before Easter: the resurrection of his friend Lazarus. Jesus knows that his dear friend Lazarus is about to die. He sets out on his journey, but arrives at his house four days after the burial, when by then all hope had been lost. His presence, however, rekindles a little confidence in the hearts of the sisters Martha and Mary (*cf. vv. 22, 27*). They cling to this light, to this small hope, despite their suffering. Jesus invites them to have faith and asks for the tomb to be opened. He then prays to the Father and shouts to Lazarus: "Come out!" (*v. 43*). And the latter comes back to life and comes out. This is the miracle, just like that, simple.

The message is clear: Jesus gives life even when it seems that all hope has gone. It happens, at times, to feel hopeless — this has happened to us all — or to meet people who have given up hope; embittered by bad experiences, the wounded heart cannot hope. Because of a painful loss, an illness, a bitter disappointment, a wrong or a betrayal suffered, a grave error committed... they have given up hope. At times we hear some say that "there is nothing more to be done!", and they close the door to all hope. They are moments when life seems to be a sealed tomb: everything is dark, and we can see only sorrow and despair around us. Today's miracle tells us that it is not like that, this is not the end, that in these moments we are not alone. On the contrary, it is precisely in these moments that He comes closer than ever to restore life to us. Jesus weeps: the Gospel tells us that Jesus wept in front of Lazarus' tomb, and today Jesus weeps with us, as he was able to weep for Lazarus: the Gospel repeats twice that he is moved (*cf. vv. 33, 38*), emphasizing that he burst into tears (*cf. v. 35*). And at the same time Jesus invites us not to stop believing and hoping, not to let ourselves be crushed by the negative feelings that take away our tears. He approaches our tombs and says to us, as then: "Take away the stone" (*v. 39*). In these moments, it is as though we have a stone inside, and the only one capable of removing it is Jesus, with his words: "Take away the stone".

Jesus says this to us too. Take away the stone : the pain, the mistakes, even the failures. Do not hide them inside you, in a dark, lonely, closed room. Take away the stone : draw out everything that is inside. "Ah, but I am ashamed". Throw it to me with confidence, says the Lord; I will not be scandalized. Throw it to me without fear because I am with you, I care about you and I want you to start living again. And, as he did with Lazarus, he repeats to each one of us: Come out ! Rise again, get back on the path, regain your confidence! How many times, in life, did we find ourselves like this, in this situation of not having the strength to get up again. And Jesus: "Go, go on! I am with you". I will take you by the hand, says Jesus, like when you were a child learning to take your first steps. Dear brother, dear sister, take off the bandages that bind you (*cf. v. 45*); please, do not give in to the pessimism that depresses, do not give in to the fear that isolates, do not give in to the discouragement caused by the memory of bad experiences, do not give in to the fear that paralyzes. Jesus tells us, "I want you to be free. I want you alive, I will not abandon you and I am with you! Everything is dark, but I am with you! Do not let yourself be imprisoned by pain, do not let hope die. Brother, sister, come back to life!". "And how can I do this?". "Take my hand", and he takes us by the hand. Let yourself be pulled out — and he is capable of doing it — in these bad moments that happen to us all.

Dear brothers and sisters, this passage in chapter 11 of the Gospel of John which does a great deal of good to read, is a hymn to life, and it is proclaimed when Easter is near. Perhaps we too in this moment carry in our heart some burden or some suffering that seems to crush us; something bad, some old sin we cannot bring out, some youthful mistake, you never know. These bad things need to come out. And Jesus says, "Come out!". So, it is the moment to take away the stone and to go out towards Jesus, who is close. Can we open our hearts to him and entrust our worries to him? Do we do it? Are we able to open the tomb of problems — are we capable — and look over the threshold, towards his light, or are we afraid of this? And in turn, as small mirrors of God's love, do we manage to illuminate the surroundings in which we live with words and gestures of life? Do we bear witness to the hope and joy of Jesus — we, sinners, all of us? And also, I would like to say some words to confessors: dear brothers, do not forget that you too are sinners, and you are in the confessional not to torture but to forgive, and to forgive everything, just as the Lord forgives everything. May Mary, Mother of Hope, renew in us the joy of not feeling alone and the call to bring light into the darkness that surrounds us.

POPE FRANCIS — March 26, 2023

Stations of the Cross: will be at 10:30AM in English each Friday during Lent.

Viacrucis: Todos los viernes del tiempo de Cuaresma a las 11:30AM en Español.

JOHN B. MILLER & FRIENDS LENT CONCERT —Featuring Carrie Guse, Joe Orlando & Andrea Weber-Steckly, on **Thursday March 26th at 7pm**. No tickets are needed, free will offering to support John B. Miller and Friends, donations may be made in cash at the concert (we suggest \$20 per person), or sent by Interac e-transfer to: john@johnbmiller.ca or by regular mail to: John Miller, 520 Country Clair Pl. Kitchener, N2A 4M7. More information, please contact <https://www.johnbmiller.ca/>

“HELP NOT HARM” CAMPAIGN: The Archdiocese of Toronto has launched a national initiative entitled **“Help Not Harm”** to raise awareness about proposed changes to Canada’s Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation and to encourage respectful engagement with Members of Parliament.

Current federal legislation is scheduled to expand eligibility for MAiD to individuals whose sole underlying condition is mental illness beginning March 17, 2027. In response to these developments, a Private Member’s Bill currently before Parliament—**Bill C-218, the Right to Recover Act**—proposes an amendment to the Criminal Code that would prevent this expansion.

Through the Help Not Harm campaign, Catholics and all people of goodwill are invited to learn more about the issue and to respectfully contact their Member of Parliament in support of Bill C-218 through the HelpNotHarmCanada.ca website. The campaign website provides a simple tool that allows individuals to send a message to their MP in just a few minutes. Messages sent through the site are also copied to the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Justice.

Find the [Information Sheet](#) here. To learn more about the campaign and to contact your Member of Parliament, visit: HelpNotHarmCanada.ca and [Full Statement in Diocesan Website](#)

ENGLISH MASS SCHEDULE

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Saturday, March 21 **5:00 PM**
+Keshini Namasiuayam +Ron Deitner

Sunday, March 22 **9:00 AM**
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

Tuesday, March 24 **11:00 AM**

Wednesday, March 25 **11:00 AM**

Thursday, March 26 **11:00 AM**
+Nicola Scarfone

Friday, March 27 **11:00 AM**

Palm Sunday of the Passion of Lord

Saturday, March 28 **5:00 PM**
+Ron Deitner +Maria Rebelo

Sunday, March 29 **9:00 AM**
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

MISAS EN ESPAÑOL

V Domingo de Cuaresma

Sabado 21 de Marzo **7:00PM**
+Amanda Hernandez

Domingo 22 de Marzo **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

Martes 24 de Marzo **12:00 PM**

Miercoles 25 de Marzo **12:00 PM**

Jueves 26 de Marzo **12:00 PM**

Viernes 27 de Marzo **12:00 PM**

Domingo de Ramos de la Pasión del Señor

Sabado 28 de Marzo **7:00PM**

Domingo 29 de Marzo **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

REPRESENTACION OBRAS DE TEATRO

Aqui en nuestra parroquia, en el salon parroquial.

Ultima Cena: Jueves 2 de abril 8:00PM

La Pasion del Señor: Vienes 3 de abril a las 5PM & 8:30PM

La Resurreccion del Señor: Domingo 5 de abril a las 3PM.