



# Our Parish COMMUNITY

March 29, 2020

Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)

Ez 37:12–14 / Rom 8:8–11

Jn 11:1–45 or 11:3–7, 17,  
20–27, 33b–45

## God Opens Our Graves

**I**t is not ghosts that come out of these graves, but a second chance at life. Ezekiel compares the reestablishment of ancient Israel after the exile with the dead rising alive from their graves. They are filled with God's spirit, God's power of life, and they have a second chance at living. Only the graciousness of God could imagine such a marvel; only the power of God could accomplish it. Jesus performs an even greater marvel. He actually brings Lazarus back from death, giving him a second chance at living. Once again, only the graciousness of God could imagine such a marvel; only the power of God could accomplish it. Jesus is that graciousness and that power, as he declares: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

After its reestablishment, Israel was not immune to failure, nor was Lazarus exempt from eventual death. That was not the point. The point was a demonstration of divine generosity at that particular moment. As seen in the Gospel reading, the point is Jesus' self-identification: "I am the resurrection and the life." What follows is paradox: Those who live in him will not die; even if they die, they will live.

Joined to the one who is the resurrection and the life, we too will be raised from our graves and be transformed into a new life. We will never again face failure, as did the Israelites, or death, as did Lazarus, for the Spirit of Jesus will live in us.

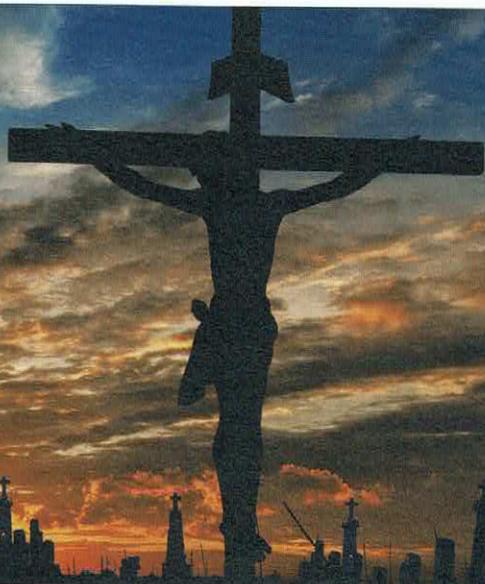
—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *We were plunged into death and rose to new life at baptism. Does your life give evidence of this?*
- ★ *In what ways does your life manifest the Spirit working through you?*

*You shall know that I am  
the LORD, when I open your  
graves and make you come  
up out of them, my people!*

EZEKIEL 37:13



**March 29, 2020**  
**Fifth Sunday of Lent**

**Reading 1 EZ 37:12-14**

Thus says the Lord GOD:  
O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel.  
Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people!  
I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land;  
thus you shall know that I am the LORD.  
I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD.

**PS 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8.**

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities, LORD, who can stand? But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

I trust in the LORD;  
my soul trusts in his word.  
More than sentinels wait for the dawn, let Israel wait for the LORD.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

For with the LORD is kindness and with him is plenteous redemption;  
And he will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

**Reading 2 ROM 8:8-11**

Brothers and sisters:  
Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.  
But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.  
Whoever does not have the

Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.

### **Verse Before The Gospel**

**JN 11:25A, 26**

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will never die.

### **Gospel**     **JN 11:1-45**

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.

So the sisters sent word to him saying, "Master, the one you love is ill."

When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to his disciples,

"Let us go back to Judea."

The disciples said to him,

"Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day?"

If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

He said this, and then told them,

"Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him."

So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved."

But Jesus was talking about his death,

while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him." So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away.

And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise."

Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on

the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you."

As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him.

For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him,

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said,

"Where have you laid him?"

They said to him, "Sir, come and see."

And Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, "See how he loved him."

But some of them said,

"Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and

said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me."

And when he had said this, He cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.

So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.



## ***Gospel Reflection***

As we draw near to the end of Lent, today's Gospel clearly has Jesus' passion and death in view.

That's why John gives us the detail about Lazarus' sister, Mary—that she is the one who anointed the Lord for burial. His disciples warn against returning to Judea; Thomas even predicts they will "die with Him" if they go back.

When Lazarus is raised, John notices the tombstone being taken away, as well as Lazarus' burial cloths and head covering—all details he later notices with Jesus' empty tomb.

Like the blind man in last week's readings, Lazarus represents all humanity. He stands for "dead man"—for all those Jesus loves and wants to liberate from the bands of sin and death.

John even recalls the blind man in his account today. Like the man's birth in blindness, Lazarus' death is used by Jesus to reveal "the glory of God". Again like last week, Jesus'

words and deeds give sight to those who believe.

If we believe, we will see—that Jesus loves each of us as He loved Lazarus, that He calls us out of death and into new life.

By His Resurrection Jesus has fulfilled Ezekiel's promise in today's First Reading. He has opened the graves that we may rise, put His Spirit in us that we may live. This is the Spirit that Paul writes of in today's Epistle. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will give life to we who were once dead in sin.

Faith is the key. If we believe as Martha does in today's Gospel—that Jesus is the resurrection and the life—even if we die, we will live.

"I have promised and I will do it," the Father assures us in the First Reading. We must trust in His word, as we sing in today's Psalm—that with Him is forgiveness and salvation.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

Pray to end Abortion, Russell Brooks, Cassie & Clifton Centers, Maere Tekanene, Bill Moses, Jerry Roberts, Donna Blevins, Norma Wilson, Dennis Parks & Family, Erica Davis, Chris & Amanda Decker, Marian Colette, Debbie Moses Haggins, Rose Grant, Sandy Hurts, Dominic Cureton, Todd Morris, Charles Pennington (Louann Lennon's father), Alex Woods, Christopher Braden, Bonnie (Warfield) Bishop, Sister Alice, Curt and LeeAnn Hall, Jay Baird, Gary Hackler, Patricia Hernandez-Torres, and loved ones who are ill.

## ***UPCOMING SAINTS AND FEASTS***

***Saint Francis of Paola,  
Hermit***

April 2

***Saint Isidore, Bishop and  
Doctor of the Church***

April 4

***Palm Sunday of the Passion  
of the Lord***

April 5

# Dear Padre,

I'm very disturbed at some clothing—or lack thereof—worn at Mass these days. I find myself being judgmental and I don't want to be. Does our *Catechism* mandate a dress code?

**B**eing judgmental can exist on both sides of this issue: Those who dress casually or inappropriately at Mass may be seen as unmotivated and disrespectful; those who dress up may be accused of doing so not for God but to impress everyone else at Mass.

The casual-dress advocates are influenced by the current relaxed cultural norms on attire—in church and elsewhere. They rightfully point out that one's presence at Mass is more important to God than one's clothing. The dress-up advocates may believe this, too. However, the thought of actually being in God's presence at Mass determines their clothing choice.

Thus, an understanding of how the Mass is viewed today affects both casual-dress and dress-up proponents. While Catholics believe that Christ is present in all of creation and history, Christ's presence under the appearances of bread and wine is fundamental to our tradition. Moreover, a full appreciation of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist impacts far more than our outward appearances!

While the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has no official dress guidelines, it's best to assume that most attend Mass for the same reasons as you. Essentially, most people who dress sensibly and make an effort to attend Mass are expressing their reverence and love for God.

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSSr  
[Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org](mailto:Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org)



DAVID BRINTZ/UTTERSTOCK



## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*I invite you to think for a moment, in silence, here: Where is my interior necrosis? Where is the dead part of my soul? Where is my tomb? ...And to remove the stone, to take away the stone of shame and allow the Lord to say to us, as he said to Lazarus: "Come out!"*

—HOMILY, APRIL 6, 2014

## Calendar

### Monday

MARCH 30

*Lenten Weekday*

Dn 13:1–9, 15–17,

19–30, 33–62

or 13:41c–62

Jn 8:1–11

### Tuesday

MARCH 31

*Lenten Weekday*

Nm 21:4–9

Jn 8:21–30

### Wednesday

APRIL 1

*Lenten Weekday*

Dn 3:14–20,

91–92, 95

Jn 8:31–42

### Thursday

APRIL 2

*Lenten Weekday*

Gn 17:3–9

Jn 8:51–59

### Friday

APRIL 3

*Lenten Weekday*

Jer 20:10–13

Jn 10:31–42

### Saturday

APRIL 4

*Lenten Weekday*

Ez 37:21–28

Jn 11:45–56

### Sunday

APRIL 5

*Palm Sunday of the*

*Passion of the Lord*

Mt 21:1–11

Is 50:4–7

Phil 2:6–11

Mt 26:14—27:66

or Mt 27:11–54