

Read

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4,
5-6, 7-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45 or 11:3-7, 17,
20-27, 33b-45



REFLECTION

The story of Lazarus' death and Jesus' raising of him from the dead reveals to us the depth of Jesus' empathy and divine love. When Jesus learns of Lazarus' illness, he doesn't rush to intervene, allowing the sorrow to unfold for the greater glory of God. Arriving at the scene, he expresses his grief and shares in that time of mourning with those who are gathered.

This pivotal moment at Lazarus' tomb challenges the notion some people have of a God who is distant and shields himself from the suffering and pain we experience. Jesus, despite having the power to overcome death, engages deeply with the pain and loss experienced by his friends. His tears affirm his understanding of our human experience of mourning.

At the same time, his response to the situation—raising Lazarus from the dead—shows us that he can move us beyond suffering and loss. This passage encourages us to bring our grief to Jesus, trusting that, like Lazarus, our moments of despair can be transformed into displays of God's life-restoring grace. In facing loss with Jesus, we find solace in a savior who not only empathizes but triumphs over the very source of our sorrow.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Jesus wept when he heard about Lazarus. Why is it important that Jesus understands our sadness?
- ❖ How do you feel when you experience loss or sadness? Are you comfortable expressing those feelings with others?

LIVING THE WORD

Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2026



ACTION

Christ's grief at the death of Lazarus shows us that pain and sorrow are an important part of the whole human experience, one that Jesus didn't try to avoid. Take time to write a letter to Jesus, expressing any grief, pain, or loss you may be carrying. Share your emotions openly, trusting that Jesus understands your grief and wants to bring new life from your pain.



"By Your Side"

—Tenth Avenue North

<https://youtu.be/f6fr2vJZAVM>



March 22, 2026

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

LECTIONARY #34A

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45 or 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

This story of the raising of Lazarus finds Jesus at the home of his close friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It is a story of the promise of our eternal hope triumphing over grief. It is also the final sign (miracle) that Jesus does in John's Gospel before John turns his attention to describing the events leading up to Jesus' passion and death. Because Jesus has performed many signs, including raising Lazarus, the authorities become concerned with the power he demonstrates, that he has been blaspheming, and that the following of people he has drawn by his actions will get out of hand. Ironically, they decide to put him to death for signs he has done that have been life giving.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus is the resurrection and the life.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week, on March 25, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. On this day, we remember the archangel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. Nine months from this day, we will celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas. It is appropriate then that we take time to honor Mary's response to God's plan for the fulfillment of salvation history. Mary was not forced to accept God's plan. She had free will like any other human being, but because she was also free from sin (she was "full of grace"), she was able to say

yes fully and completely to God, to cooperate with his plan. She wanted to follow God's will for her life.

Church Teaching Connection

"Christ pulls down the wall of death and in him dwells all the fullness of God, who is life, eternal life. Therefore death did not have power over him and the raising of Lazarus is a sign of his full dominion over physical death which, before God, resembles sleep (cf. Jn 11:11). However there is another death, which cost Christ the hardest struggle, even the price of the Cross: it is spiritual death and sin which threaten to ruin the existence of every human being. To overcome this death, Christ died and his Resurrection is not a return to past life, but an opening to a new reality, a 'new land' united at last with God's Heaven" (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Message, April 10, 2011).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory.

Gospel

John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

The sisters of Lazarus sent word to Jesus, 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."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 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, "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."

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.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

As we approach the end of Lent, it is easy to see how this Gospel passage points us toward Christ's death and resurrection. It also reminds us that death is a part of our human life, and that grief and sadness are also part of it.

► **How do you think someone who has experienced the loss of a loved one might react to Jesus' words and actions in this Gospel passage? How might they feel comforted? How might they feel abandoned?**

We see, from Martha's words, that grief is multifaceted. She experiences feelings of comfort and feelings of abandonment. Her faith is strong, but she is still hurt by the death of her brother. She trusts Jesus' words and affirms her belief, but she also remains tied to the concrete reality of loss. Throughout her ups and downs, Jesus remains faithful to his mission of love and compassion. He continues to use this loss to show others the glory of God, even when they express doubt of his identity.

► **Jesus says, "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." What does this tell you about who Jesus is? What does it tell you about who we are as people who believe in this statement?**

Sometimes it can be challenging to live out our faith in the face of sadness and loss. We might feel abandoned by God. But Jesus' words are a promise that is placed upon each baptized member of the Body of Christ. On this Sunday, those preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil undergo the third and final scrutiny. They are reminded that this is the promise they will enter into: just as they are baptized into Christ's death, they are also baptized into his eternal life and will rise with him on the last day.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 158.

**In our grief, we experience many emotions;
God is with us through all of them.**

**Christ is the resurrection and the life; this is
the promise we rest our eternal hope on.**

**In baptism, we die with Christ and rise with
him to new life.**

Act on the Word

My Biography

For this activity, you will need paper and pens.

Today's Gospel reading brings us to the sad occasion of the death of Lazarus and invites us to reflect on our own lives and what we hope to accomplish with them. Share with the teens that this activity will allow them to write biographies of themselves, describing the way their lives have been and will be lived and outlining the things that were and are most important to them. Typically, when someone is writing about their own life, it is an autobiography and is written in the first person. However, this activity will be written as a biography in the third person, as if the teens were outside of themselves looking in and describing the life that was lived. This will give the young people a different perspective on their lives, and the distance might help them to clarify some of their own goals, expectations, and hopes.

Hand out the paper and pens to the teens. Allow them to spread out in the room so they each have a

quiet space to reflect on their lives so far and the hopes they have for their futures. You can ask them some questions to help frame their reflection. What achievements would they include? What goals do they have that they hope to accomplish? What relationships will they mention? Who in their life is significant to them? What causes do they believe in and support? What role does faith play in their life? Did they travel a lot? Encourage them to include things that have happened, as well as things that have not happened but they hope will.

After several minutes, when the teens have finished writing, invite them to share their biographies with a partner, in small groups, or with the larger group.

Closing Prayer

*Almighty and ever living God,
we turn to you in times of suffering and pain,
seeking the tender assurance of your care.
Grant us a spirit of hope,
so we might live with renewed fervor
as we await the fullness of life in heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Palm Sunday Mass with family or friends. Give teens the Holy Week schedule and encourage them to attend the Triduum liturgies.