

# 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

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 29, 2020



#### REFLECTION

What images do you think of when you hear the word “death”? Coffins, a grim reaper, the color black? Do you get a scared or sinking feeling along with those images? Death is scary. We hear today how God promises to bring us back from our graves in the first reading, and then Jesus fulfills that promise when he raises Lazarus from the dead. Perhaps you have encountered a bad situation in your life. If not the death of a loved one, then maybe another difficulty. Remember that God can bring good out of every single situation, even death. We will not be able to see it until it happens. Jesus’ close friends Martha and Mary did not understand that Jesus was going to raise their brother! However, knowing that God has things under control, we can be free of living in fear of any “worst case scenario.”

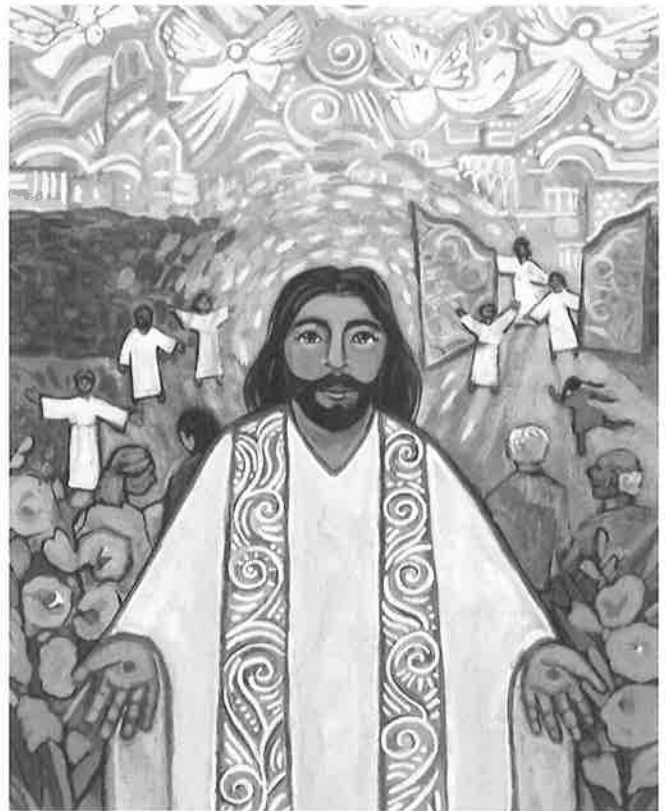
#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What verse of the readings spoke to you most today?
- ❖ What does spiritual death mean? How does God rescue us from that?



#### ACTION

In a number of places in the readings today, promises are made by God to assure us that he has conquered death and will give us life. We will eventually have freedom from physical death, but also from spiritual death. These promises are our ultimate hope; after all, if we are not afraid of death, we have nothing whatsoever to fear! Write out the places where God we are promised life and freedom beyond death, and read them over slowly. Then, write a prayer to say when you are afraid of any problem and keep it somewhere you will be able to find it easily.





March 29, 2020

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

### LECTIONARY #34A

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

## 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

The raising of Lazarus is the high point of Jesus' ministry in John's Gospel. We witness here Jesus' power over death and glimpse our future with the one who will save us from death. We behold the earliest of Jesus' believers proclaiming that he is the Son of God, the Christ, and see the fruits of their faith in Jesus.

**Q FOCUS:** *Jesus has command over the laws of nature.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Find today's date on the liturgical calendar. Note that Holy Week begins next week, and mention that the young people may hear and see the elect participate in the third Scrutiny (explain the concept if the students are not aware of it). Observe together the Triduum liturgy, explaining that it is one liturgy over the course of three days.

### Church Teaching Connection

"We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 989; referencing John 6:39-40).

## 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.*

**Glory to you, O Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!**

### 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:*

In John's account of the Gospel, Jesus' ministry culminates in the story of Lazarus. Throughout the Gospel we see Jesus performing miracles, and restoring people to health, wellness, and importantly, wholeness. The story of Lazarus includes all these aspects of Jesus' ministry. Early in the story the reader is puzzled—Jesus is told that his friend is dying, but instead of going to his friend and ministering to him immediately, Jesus stays two days where he was before traveling back to Judea. When he arrives, he learns that Lazarus is dead and had been in his tomb for four days.

► **Why did Jesus not go to Lazarus?**

► **Why did he not save his friend?**

Lazarus' sisters know that if Jesus had been present, Lazarus would not have died. They are very certain, and they have tremendous faith in Jesus' healing power. The sisters are wise, and know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

When Jesus arrives in Judea, he weeps for his friend, grieving his death. Soon after that, Jesus shows his authority and power over death, and commands that Lazarus walk out of his tomb. When the man emerges after being buried for four days, the Gospel makes it clear that Lazarus himself, not just a spirit or image of him, emerges from the tomb. "Untie him and let him go" (John 11:44) is Jesus' instruction. The dead man was made to live, and people were brought to faith in Jesus.

There is an important theological point that is apparent in Jesus' words. Jesus says to Martha, "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" (John 11:25–26). These words tell us a great deal about Jesus. We learn here that Jesus is not just able to heal people from maladies, he is able to raise the dead back to life. More

specifically, he is telling people about the resurrection on the last day, and that he specifically *is* the resurrection and the life. We can all expect an earthly death, but in Christ Jesus we never actually die.

► **What does it mean that we do not die?**

We all have bodies that age and grow old and infirm. We all have hearts that will cease beating, lungs that will stop filling with air, and brains that will stop firing the complex pathways that allow thought. All of those things will cease . . . but our souls will not die, and our souls we entrust to Jesus. Like Lazarus, we hope in Jesus' life-giving mercy. We wait in joyful hope for that one day when Jesus will return and we will be reunited with our bodies, restored through Christ in the resurrection.

Until then, each Lenten season we die to sin and rise again through Christ Jesus.

## 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 162.*

**To what sins are you dying in this Lenten season? What does healing from these sins through Jesus look like?**

**Grief is, sadly, a part of human life. Have you ever felt angry at God because a friend or family member died?**

**This Lent, what changes have you made, and how have those changes affected you and those in your family or school?**

# Act on the Word

## Lectio Divina

*Lectio Divina* is an ancient form of prayer, meditation and encountering Scripture. The Latin phrase *Lectio Divina* means holy reading, and this form of prayer was used in the early centuries of the Church. Teach the young people this prayer form by first explaining the steps of the prayer. The main steps of *Lectio Divina* are as follows:

- ✧ Quiet the environment, the body and the mind.
- ✧ Read the selected scripture passage slowly. (Use a passage from today's Gospel reading.)
- ✧ Pause for reflection, and read the passage again.
- ✧ Pause for reflection and read the passage a third time.
- ✧ Initiate discussion in small groups. Ask the students to discuss the words that drew their attention, how they connected with various aspects of the reading, and how they are called to act on what they learn about the reading.

## Closing Prayer

*God of the living and the dead,  
you offer us life in you.  
Free us from expectations not worthy of  
the Gospel  
that we will live freely as your children.  
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](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*