

## March 17, 2024 FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

### READING I *Ezekiel 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.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

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.

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,  
LORD, who can stand?

But with you is forgiveness,  
that you may be revered. R.

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.

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

### READING II *Romans 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.

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

*Longer: John 11:1-45*

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.

## ***Practice of Charity***

By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus reveals the new life he brings. ♦ Each day this week, pray for those who have died. Remember especially those who died with no one to mourn them. ♦ Jesus gave up his own life out of a deep love for Lazarus and all people. Others followed in his footsteps. Learn more about a Christian martyr. How did this person also reveal and participate in God's love? ♦ When we die, our loved ones will mourn. Relieve some of their burden by preparing your will. Is there anything else you should put in place in the event of your death?

*Download more questions and activities for families, initiation groups, and other adult groups at <http://www.ltp.org/ahw>.*

## ***Scripture Insights***

Having just escaped the religious authorities' attempt to arrest him, Jesus is in retreat across the Jordan when the news about Lazarus' illness in Bethany reaches him (John 10:39—11:3, 7–8, 16). Lazarus has been buried for four days by the time Jesus arrives (John 11:17).

The passage mentions Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters (John 11:3, 5). It also uses a particular verb that expresses emotion, even anger—translated as "perturbed" in English—twice (John 11:33, 38), not to mention an explicit reference to Jesus himself weeping (John 11:35–36). Because of his raising of Lazarus, the religious authorities decide that they must eliminate Jesus (John 11:46–57). This story about Lazarus foreshadows, then, Jesus' death and resurrection. The cross of Jesus is related to a story that arguably expresses his love and gift of life in a most concrete way.

In response to Martha's words, which limit resurrection to "the last day," Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:21–26). The phrase "and the life" emphasizes Jesus' gift not only as an otherworldly promise but also as a this-worldly reality. Since this phrase "and the life" is missing in some ancient Greek manuscripts, one may wonder if some ancient scribes were repeating Martha's mistake by placing a narrow focus on resurrection as something for the future. Although this story of love and resurrection begins as a story of grief (because Jesus did not get to Bethany earlier), it affirms that abundant life is available through Jesus right here and right now, even when things look dead and when Jesus seems absent (see John 14:15–27; Romans 8:8–11).

- ♦ This story about the three siblings and Jesus seem to link love closely with death. Where do you see these connections, and how may we understand these connections?
- ♦ Psalm 130 presents a waiting for God in hope. How is that similar to or different from Martha's focus on only a future "resurrection"?
- ♦ What feels dry and dead in this season of your life and your community's life?