

[30]

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

A

### FIRST READING

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel

37:12-14

**T**he Lord said to Ezekiel:

Tell the people that I, the Lord God,  
promise to open their graves and set them free,  
so they can go home to their land.  
When I let them out of their graves,  
they will know that I am the Lord.  
My Spirit will give them breath.  
They will live again,  
and I will bring them back home.  
Then they will know that I, the Lord God,  
have kept my promise.

The word of the Lord.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

130:1-2, 5 and 7bcd

*R. (7bc) With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

From a sea of troubles  
I call out to you, Lord.  
Won't you please listen  
as I beg for mercy?

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

With all my heart,  
I am waiting, Lord, for you!  
I trust your promises.  
God is always merciful,  
and he has the power to save you.

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

## VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

John 11:25, 26

*R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;  
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.

*R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## GOSPEL

I am the resurrection and the life.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 31-45

**M**artha and her sister Mary sent a message to the Lord  
and told him that his good friend Lazarus was sick.

When Jesus heard this, he said,  
“His sickness won’t end in death.  
It will bring glory to God and his Son.”

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and brother.  
But he stayed where he was for two more days.  
Then he said to his disciples,  
“Now we’ll go back to Judea.”

When Jesus got to Bethany,  
he found Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived,  
she went out to meet him,  
but Mary stayed in the house.  
Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.  
Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask.”

Jesus told her, “Your brother will live again!”

Martha answered,  
“I know that he will be raised to life on the last day,  
when all the dead are raised.”

Jesus then said,  
“I am the one who raises the dead to life!

Everyone who has faith in me will live,  
even if they die.  
And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never die.  
Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord!" she replied.  
"I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God.  
You are the one we hoped would come into the world."

Many people had come to comfort Mary,  
and when they saw her quickly leave the house,  
they thought she was going out to the tomb to cry.  
So they followed her.

Mary went to where Jesus was.  
Then as soon as she saw him,  
she kneeled at his feet and said,  
"Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw that Mary and the people with her were crying,  
he was terribly upset and asked,  
"Where have you put his body?"

They replied, "Lord, come and you will see."

Jesus started crying, and the people said,  
"See how much he loved Lazarus."

Some of them said, "He gives sight to the blind.  
Why couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Jesus was still terribly upset.  
So he went to the tomb,  
which was a cave with a stone rolled against the entrance.  
Then he told the people to roll the stone away.  
But Martha said, "Lord, you know that Lazarus has been dead four days,  
and there will be a bad smell."

Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you had faith,  
you would see the glory of God?"

After the stone had been rolled aside,  
Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed,  
"Father, I thank you for answering my prayer.  
I know that you always answer my prayers."

But I said this,  
so that the people here would believe that you sent me.”

When Jesus had finished praying, he shouted,  
“Lazarus, come out!”  
The man who had been dead came out.  
His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of burial cloth,  
and a cloth covered his face.

Jesus then told the people, “Untie him and let him go.”

Many of the people who had come to visit Mary  
saw the things that Jesus did,  
and they put their faith in him.

The gospel of the Lord.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – Jesus raises his friend Lazarus.

### **Prayer:**

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for being such a good friend. Help me to remember that you love me just as much as you loved Lazarus when you raised him from the dead.

In your name we pray.

Amen

### **Readings:**

Ezekiel 37:12 – 14

John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 31-45

### **Reflection:**

How cool would it be to have a friend who could perform miracles?! It could be very handy to have someone around who could make you well anytime you got sick, provide food whenever you were hungry and make you live again after you died.

Try to imagine what it would be like to live without worrying about anything because you have a friend who can fix any of your problems. All you have to do is ask. How would it feel? What would you do?

Guess what? You do have a friend who can perform miracles! A best friend! Jesus! We talk a lot about how much Jesus loves us but have you ever thought of Jesus as your friend? Try it. Try talking to Jesus just as you would your friends. Tell him how your day is going, how mad you are at your Mom, how it hurt your feelings when another kid said something mean, how you love playing baseball, how great it felt to do well on your test, etc. Talk to Him all day long just like your friends at school.

When you talk to Jesus, don't forget that you can also ask Him for favors just as you would any other friend and just as any other friend does, trust that He loves you so much that He will do His best to help you. That does not mean that you will get everything you ask for. Think about why you might not get what you want. Do your parents and friends always give you what you ask for? Sometimes others know that something that we want might not be the best thing for us.

We have heard about the many miracles that Jesus performed with the raising of Lazarus from the dead being the biggest. Trust that Jesus can and will perform miracles for you since you are His best friend just like Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Do you have a best friend that you know would do anything for you?

Have you ever thought about Jesus being your best friend?

How has he shown in the Bible that he loves you and is your best friend?

How has he shown you in your life that He loves you and is your best friend?

How can you show Him that you are His best friend?

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### **Activity: MIRACLES OR MAGIC**

Materials needed:

Old dirty-looking pennies (one for each child)

One shiny new-looking penny

Bottle of white vinegar

Salt

Measuring spoon

Small dish

Paper towel

WHAT THE TEACHER DOES: (To prepare ahead)

Mix 6 Tbsp. vinegar with 2 Tbsp. of salt in the small dish.

Stir until it is dissolved.

WHAT THE CHILDREN DO:

Give each child a dirty penny. Show them a brand-new shiny penny. Do you believe we can make your pennies look pretty like this one without any scrubbing or rubbing? Have the children all drop their pennies into the dish. While they are soaking in the vinegar solution discuss the following: "Was Jesus a miracle maker or a magic man? What is the difference between miracles and magic? (Magic is used to entertain people; It's a show based on tricks and deceptions. Magic can be explained. Miracles are things that happen for good that cannot be explained by people.) Check the pennies. This looks like magic. Actually it can be explained scientifically. The liquid in the dish contains vinegar and salt which is what cleaned the pennies. This is not a miracle; it can be explained. Jesus did not do magic. He did miracles which could not be explained. The things he did like healing the sick, giving sight to the blind and casting out demons were done for the good of people. No one could explain how He did them, and no one else could work the miracles He did. He did them because He loved people and wanted to help them. He wanted to make their lives new like these shiny pennies. The miracle in our story today is one of the most amazing ones He did while He lived on this earth.