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**Year A** 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

## Sunday Mass Readings

**First Reading:**

Ezekiel 37:12-14

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalm 129 (130)

**Second Reading:**

Romans 8:8-11

**Gospel:**

John 11:1-45

*"I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world."*



Léon Bonnat, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

## Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

## Pray

- In the Gospel today we hear the story of Jesus raising his friend Lazarus to life.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- "I am the Resurrection and the Life": Jesus promises us so much, and we can trust Him: he defeated the power of sin and death. What do you need to trust Jesus with this week?
- Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw his friends Martha and Mary mourning at the death of their brother, and his friend, Lazarus. Do you believe that Jesus is moved with compassion for your suffering and trials too? Lean into His compassion, believe in His love for you, and His desire to heal all your wounds this week.

## Talk

In today's Gospel we hear about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

- What do we believe about Jesus? Martha confessed her belief in Jesus as the Christ, and Jesus declared He was the resurrection and the life.
- The Creed that we usually pray at Mass is called the Nicene creed, and the creed we pray at the beginning of the rosary is the Apostles' Creed. What elements of our faith make up the creed? Are there any parts we are confused about?
- Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life", "I am the Good Shepherd", "I am the Light of the World". Can you think of any other statements Jesus made about Himself?

## Family Challenge!

Make an effort each day this week to pray the Apostles' Creed together as a family, slowly and prayerfully, really thinking about what the prayer and profession of faith means.

# POWER OVER DEATH

Our Gospel on this day, the fifth Sunday of Lent, is again taken from the Gospel according to John. The reading from John continues the break from Cycle A's focus on the Gospel of Matthew. Today's Gospel reading recounts another sign, or miracle, found in John's Gospel, the raising of Lazarus. As our catechumens move closer to the celebration of their Baptisms at the Triduum, today's reading invites us to reflect upon what it means to call Jesus the Resurrection and the life.

The context for the story of the raising of Lazarus is the Jewish leaders' growing animosity toward Jesus. Jesus has been in Jerusalem, taking part in the feast of the Dedication, which we have come to know as Hanukkah. The people have been pressing him to declare plainly whether he is the Messiah. Jesus tells them to look to his works, which testify to his coming from God. Many do not believe Jesus, however, and some try to stone him for blasphemy.

Into this scene of confrontation, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, send word to Jesus that his friend is ill. Jesus is said to love Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, but he delays his journey for two days. The delay heightens the drama and shows Jesus' obedience to God, who is to be glorified through Lazarus's resurrection. When Jesus finally declares that he will journey to Bethany, his disciples fear for his life. Thomas declares that he and the other disciples should prepare to die with Jesus.

The scene described at Bethany is a sad one. Martha meets Jesus weeping and saying that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died. Yet she remains confident that God will do whatever Jesus asks. Martha affirms her belief that there will be a resurrection of the dead in the last days. Then Martha's sister, Mary, comes to Jesus with the same confidence, saying that Jesus could have cured Lazarus. Jesus asks to be brought to Lazarus's tomb where he prays and calls Lazarus out from the tomb. At this sign, many come to believe in Jesus, but others take word of the miracle to the Jewish authorities, who begin their plans for Jesus' death.

Set against the backdrop of Jesus' impending death, many elements of the raising of Lazarus foreshadow the good news of Jesus' own Resurrection. Jesus, facing the conflict with the Jewish authorities, acts in complete obedience to God. In raising Lazarus, Jesus shows his power over death so that when Jesus dies, those who believe in him might remember that and take hope. Just as Jesus calls for the stone to be rolled away from Lazarus's tomb, so too will the disciples find the stone rolled away from Jesus' tomb.

With our catechumens preparing for their Baptism at Easter, the Gospel today calls us to reflect on Baptism as a dying and rising with Jesus. In Baptism we die to sin's power over us, rising as children of God. In Baptism we join ourselves with Christ, who conquered death once and for all so that we who believe in him may have eternal life. With Martha and Mary, we are called to profess our belief that Jesus is indeed the Resurrection and the life.

## Loyola Press Sunday Connection

## CHECK IT OUT: ASCEND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY



The Ascend Three Year Strategic Plan for Youth & Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore was officially launched on Monday 20th March by Bishop Cullinan. This is an exciting time for youth & young adult ministry in our diocese, as this collaborative plan is put into action. Please pray for the success of this plan, for young people in our diocese and for those who work with them. More information on the plan can be found at <https://waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry/ascend-strategic-plan>



*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. Isaiah 55:9*

## TRUST THE PROCESS

There's a lot going on in this Gospel that's hard for those involved to understand. Why did Jesus not go straight to Bethany when He heard Lazarus was ill? Jesus stated "This sickness will not end in death" and yet Lazarus died. Jesus waited a full two days before He left for Bethany. He told His disciples Lazarus was resting (meaning dead) and He was going to wake Him. Can you just imagine the confusion? Yet that was nothing compared to the confusion and devastation Martha and Mary must have felt that Jesus came too late to heal their brother. But still, in the midst of this chaos and grief, Martha still had full faith in Jesus' ability to do all things. She recognised that He was the Christ. The onlookers had seen Jesus work great miracles, and knew He could have prevented Lazarus' death. So much frustration, grief and even anger and confusion. Then Jesus asks for the stone to be rolled away from the tomb and commands Lazarus to rise from the dead. Trust in the process - God's ways are not our ways. Now Jesus' earlier words about Lazarus' sickness made sense: "through it the Son of God will be glorified". Through the tears and the pain, the doubt and the darkness of the tomb, it was difficult to trust in the process, yet Jesus showed His divinity in a far greater way than if He had simply healed Lazarus of his sickness. This great miracle was to foretell His own death and resurrection. We can only imagine how much the Apostles and disciples of Jesus had to look back on and marvel on after His resurrection when the process started to make sense in light of His Passion, Death and Resurrection!

Do you find it difficult to trust in God and His ways? Try a simple version of the Novena of Surrender this week. Each day, bring to mind a particular area of your life that causes you worry, and then visualise yourself laying it down at the feet of Jesus, and ten times repeat the prayer below. Actively trust in the process and trust in God who knows all things, including what is best for your life!



• God's Ways are not Our Ways (Fr Mike Schmitz)



• Walk by Faith (Jeremy Camp)

Check out our *To the Heights Youth Newsletter*



## Family Prayer

*Lord, you are the resurrection and the life. You are the Christ who was to come into the world. Amen*



## EVENTS

**Lenten Evening of Reflection for Women:** 3 Days that changed everything: Spend time reflecting on the last days of Jesus. Talk & time of personal prayer. Monday March 27th, 7 - 8.30pm, St Joseph & St Benildus Parish Centre. Facilitator: Sr Maureen Fitzgerald ASCJ. Please call the Parish Office to reserve a place. (051) 878977

**Revive the Wonder:** "Eucharistic Mystics, Martyrs and Miracles": Tuesday 28th March in St Oliver's Parish Church, Clonmel at 7.30pm. Talk followed by time of prayer. More info on [www.waterfordlismore.ie](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie)

**ZOOM LENTEN REFLECTION: A Time of Hope, Darkness into Light:** Lenten Talk with Gemma Mulligan. Wednesday 29th March at 7.30pm. Meeting ID: 864 2068 1659 | Passcode: 354594 (More info on [www.waterfordlismore.ie](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie))

**Frassati Hike for Young Adults (18-35):** Sat 1st April, Lough Mohra, leaving from entrance to Glenpatrick Wood at 9.30am. Bring a packed lunch. Mass will be celebrated. For more info [www.waterfordlismore.ie](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie) or 089 207 2588

**Retreat for Men** at Holy Family Mission, April 28 - 30. Main speaker Fr Philip Mulryne OP (former Man Utd player). €250 full board accomm. More info: (052) 6133181 / [info@holymission.ie](mailto:info@holymission.ie)

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