



## Reading 1

**EZEKIEL 37:12-14**

Introduction:

*The readings today think about death and resurrection. The condition of death can mean so much more than just the physical moment when we need an undertaker. When the prophet Ezekiel spoke to the people they were living, but they were in a condition of death. They had lost hope and any purpose in life because they were a vanquished people who were in exile in Babylon. They were like dry bones.*

*Ezekiel says that when God is involved, nothing is hopeless. God makes a promise, "I will open your graves and have you rise from them and bring you back to the land of Israel." God did fulfil that promise and the people were brought back home. They became a new people through the Spirit of God.*

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.**

Introduction:

*This psalm is one of a group of psalms called the Songs of ascent They were used by Jewish pilgrims going to Jerusalem for the Passover. In the Church Psalm 130 is one of seven penitential psalms in the Psalter (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143) that were recited each day during Lent. The penitential psalms remind us of the great divide between the goodness of God and the iniquity of humanity. They also remind us that with God there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

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

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,

LORD, who can stand?

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

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

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

For with the LORD is kindness

and with him is plenteous redemption;

And he will redeem Israel  
from all their iniquities.

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

## Reading 2

ROMANS 8:8-11

### Introduction

*Paul contrasts the old age of sin and death with the new age that Christ has provided that is characterised by life in the Spirit. The Spirit works in us to transform us into the image of Christ. This transformation is not an optional extra but the very essence of who we are as individuals and a community..*

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.

### Verse Before the Gospel

JOHN 11:25A, 26

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;

whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will never die.

### Gospel

[Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45](#)

### Introduction:

*The story of Lazarus is very familiar to us.*

*There is a deep meaning to this story which may not at first meet the eye. Jesus finds Lazarus in Bethany. Lazarus means 'God helps,' whilst Bethany means 'House of Affliction.'*

*We can all find ourselves in a place of affliction, a place so bad it is like death itself in its debilitating hopelessness. Sometimes the living need someone to call them out of their graves and to give their spirit new life, just as the people in Ezekiel's time needed God to raise them from their graves. Our Christian faith is not just about a reward in the next*

*life, Jesus is concerned about our lives now. He calls us out from our darkest places, he calls us to leave the tomb and gives us the strength to live as his resurrected people.*

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.

## REFLECTION

## Seeds of Consolation

What can I say to you, my friend,  
in your hour of grief?  
Just a word from my heart.  
In the midst of your sorrow seeds are being sown --  
seeds of consolation, hope, resignation, and even gratitude.  
This winter will pass,  
and spring will again visit the garden of your heart.  
You will see these seeds grow, blossom, and bear fruit.  
Then your sorrow will turn into joy,  
a joy no one will be able to take from you.