

The 5th Sunday of Lent - Year A – 3/22/2026 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First Reading – Ezekiel 37:12-14: God promises to resurrect and return His people to Israel, affirming His identity and power. He vows to infuse them with His spirit, assuring fulfillment of this promise.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 130: From the depths, I cry to the Lord for mercy. If He counted sins, none could stand, but with Him, there is forgiveness, redemption, and steadfast love.

Second Reading – Romans 8:8-11: Living by human nature cannot please God. True life is in the Spirit, evident if Christ's Spirit dwells in us. This Spirit brings life to our mortal bodies, just as it raised Christ.

Gospel – John 11:1-45: Lazarus from Bethany, brother of Mary and Martha, fell ill. Despite their message to Jesus, He delayed His visit, explaining the situation was to glorify God. Upon arrival, Lazarus had been dead four days. Martha expressed faith in Jesus, who declared Himself as the resurrection and life. Deeply moved and troubled by the mourning, Jesus wept, then miraculously raised Lazarus from the dead, strengthening the faith of many onlookers.

TO GLORIFY GOD

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

From the Fourth Sunday of Lent onwards, the Liturgy of the Word no longer speaks of fasting or repentance, but rather focuses on Life and the Resurrection, through stories of people whom Jesus allowed to experience, foreshadowing the physical and spiritual aspects of the Resurrection (the Samaritan Woman, the Man born blind, Lazarus raised from the dead, the Adulterous Woman freed).

Today's Gospel is another exclusive account from the author of the Fourth Gospel, not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels. A miracle of resurrection occurred to Lazarus after he had been dead and buried for four days in a stone tomb. The story revolves around two themes: FAITH and TO GLORIFY GOD.

Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary, the family of Bethany whom Jesus loved, as recorded in the Gospel (John 11:3-5). Normally, upon hearing that a loved one was seriously ill, we would immediately worry and rush to their aid. But Jesus took a different approach, saying, *“This illness will not end in death, but is for the glory of God.”*

This is similar to what He said when healing the man born blind: *“... so that God may be glorified.”* Thus, for Jesus, whatever He did, He did it for the GLORY OF GOD, affirming that whatever happens to us, whether illness or death, is for the glory of God.

Furthermore, Jesus affirms that these events occurred so that YOU MAY BELIEVE. That faith requires the courage to walk to Jerusalem, where the cross awaits and where the resurrection will also take place. Faith is the light that prevents us from stumbling, in contrast to the stealthy walk in the darkness of fear, as Jesus said to his disciples when they tried to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem: *“Those who walk in the day do not stumble, because they see the light of the sun. But those who walk at night stumble, because they have no light in themselves!”* (John 11:9b-10).

That faith is also expressed through Martha's words to Jesus: *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”*

“With the Lord, you have everything; without the Lord, you have nothing.”

Martha's words are like a lament because Jesus arrived late, so her brother Lazarus died, but this is an expression in the Gospel of John: our souls are considered dead in the absence of Jesus.

"Whatever you ask of God, God will give it to you."

This means that even though my brother is dead, if I ask God now, He will still bring him back to life. Sacramentally speaking, even though our souls may have died many times in the absence of God, if we confess our sins and welcome Christ into our hearts, Jesus will restore us to spiritual life with countless blessings.

"I know my brother will rise again when the dead rise on the last day."

This is what we profess in the Creed: *"I believe in the resurrection of the body."* Our Catholic faith affirms that after death, the souls of the righteous will enjoy the presence of God, and on the last day, their bodies will also be resurrected to enjoy eternal happiness.

In response, Jesus affirms that He is life: *"I am the resurrection and the life."*

Jesus Christ is the life of the soul. Therefore, when we do not eat the Bread of Life, our souls will perish and die.

Jesus is also the resurrection. He was the first to rise from the dead, paving the way for those who believe in Him and share in His death to be resurrected like Him.

"Whoever believes in me, though they die, will live."

If death were the end, it would be the most terrible failure of human existence, and no better than an animal. However, Christians believe in Jesus Christ, who saves them from nothingness, giving them an afterlife.

"Whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

This statement is directed at us, those who are still existing on earth. Because we believe in Jesus Christ, we will not fear death; physical death is merely a gateway to eternal life.

The narrative concludes with Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus, commanding Lazarus to rise and walk out of the tomb. Here, we encounter again the moment of overflowing LOVE in Jesus, which the Gospel affirms from the very beginning: "Jesus loved Martha and her two sisters, Mary and Lazarus" (Mt 11:5).

He was moved, troubled, and wept with compassion for the loss of Martha and Mary, as well as for the death of Lazarus. But in that compassion, Jesus performed a miracle to affirm the value of FAITH and GLORIFY GOD: "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (John 11:40) and "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I said this for the sake of the people standing around here, so that they may believe that you sent me" (John 11:41b-42).

In short, today's Gospel shows us that miracles and the resurrection happen because of FAITH, and we must glorify GOD through those miracles. Everything is within God's mysterious plan; every event in our lives is for God's glory in us and for our faith to be refined.

Lord, grant us more faith, so that You may always be glorified in all the events of our lives. Amen.