



Parish of the Holy Eucharist

Small Group Faith Sharing Material
5th Sunday of Lent—April 2, 2017
Sunday Readings

Opening Prayer

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

(source: *The Roman Missal, Third Typical Edition*)

Mass Readings

Reading 1

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.

The Word of the Lord

Commentary on Ezekiel

Ezekiel served as a prophet among God's people from 593 to 563 BCE. During this time, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians and the nation went into the Exile. The people were severely demoralized. They had lost all the signs of God's presence and God's favor from among them: the Temple was destroyed; the king was dead; their land was occupied by foreigners; they had been transported to an alien territory. The nation was as good as dead. Ezekiel offers a message of hope: God will make them live again as a nation. The Lord who gives breath to all living things will restore them to life and to their land; they will be a living people again, a nation alive with God.

QUESTIONS

1. What is God's promised gift?
2. When have you experienced God bringing life into something that was dead in your life.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 130: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

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. 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

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.

The Word of the Lord

Commentary on Romans

Death still ravages the bodies of the faithful, even after Christ has overcome death in his resurrection. But the Spirit has been poured into their spirits, and now they will endure; they will survive, even when death comes to the body. This was the Good News which attracted so much attention in the early days of Christianity. That same message goes to the very ends of the earth still today.

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be in the flesh and in the Spirit?
2. Does being "in the spirit" attract attention as it did in the early days? Why or why not?

Gospel

Jn 11: 1-45

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her

brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him 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." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him." So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. 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 to him, "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." When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, 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.

The Gospel of the Lord

Commentary on John

In John's Gospel, the event which finally brought the officials to decide they had to deal with Jesus was the resuscitation of Lazarus. The community for which John wrote considered the Lazarus story so decisive that they saw it as the hinge upon which turned all subsequent events in the witness they gave to Jesus Christ. Here, finally, is the manifestation of the One who was their hope for new life in God. Lazarus was truly dead. There could be no doubt about that. People who had died were normally buried within 24 hours. Many persons believed that the soul remained near the body for three days after death. After that, a person was truly and surely dead. In this passage, we hear that it has *been four days!* For sure, there can be no hope now. But, enter Jesus! With him, even death, true death, will not stand! He has power over life and death. He is identified with the God of the living. Death is not what God had intended for human life. The power of death has to be overcome, to show that all evil, all sin, needs to be eradicated from the world. Martha does not lose hope when everyone else said it was hopeless. She knows that Jesus is close to God and that God will hear his plea.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Lazarus was brought back to life which foreshadowed the resurrection of Jesus. How is what happened to Lazarus different from Jesus' resurrection?**
- 2. How can this be understood spiritual with the elements of our life that are dead?**

Watch the Video

Please watch the reflection on the weekly readings prepared by the staff at Parish of the Holy Eucharist. It can be found on the parish website at www.potho.org or you may obtain copies of the DVD at the parish office.



Credits

Opening Prayer. *Missale Romanum, Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 2008. *Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 2011.

Readings for Mass. Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC.

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