

GOSPEL

John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45 (Shorter form)

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.
If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.
Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.
I knew indeed that you always hear me,
but I speak
for the sake of all these who stand round me,
so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

22 March 2026

On this Fifth Sunday of Lent, the liturgy proclaims the Gospel of the raising of Lazarus (cf. Jn 11:1-45).

In the Lenten journey, this is a sign that speaks of Christ's victory over death and of the gift of eternal life, which we receive through Baptism (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1265). Today Jesus also says to us, as he did to Martha, Lazarus's sister: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (Jn 11:25-26).

The liturgy thus invites us, in light of the fact that Holy Week is drawing near, to relive the events of the Lord's Passion — the entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the trial, the crucifixion, the burial — so that we may grasp their most authentic meaning and open ourselves to the gift of grace they contain.

These events are fulfilled in the risen Christ, who has conquered death and lives within us through Baptism, for our salvation and the fullness of life.

His grace illumines this world, which seems to constantly search for novelty and change, even at the cost of sacrificing important things — time, energy, values, affections — as if fame, material goods, entertainment and fleeting relationships could fill our hearts or make us immortal. It is a symptom of a longing for the infinite that each of us carries within us, a need that cannot be satisfied by passing things. Nothing finite can quench our inner thirst, for we are made for God, and we find no peace until we rest in him (cf. Confessions, I, 1.1).

The account of the resurrection of Lazarus, then, invites us to listen to this profound need and, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to free our hearts from habits, conditioning and ways of thinking which, like boulders, shut us away in the tomb of

selfishness, materialism, violence and superficiality. In these places there is no life, but only confusion, dissatisfaction and loneliness.

Jesus also cries out to us: “Come out!” (Jn 11:43), urging us to emerge from these cramped spaces, renewed by his grace, to walk in the light of love, as new women and men, capable of hoping and loving, without calculation and without measure, according to the model of his infinite charity.

May the Virgin Mary help us to live these holy days with her faith, her trust and her fidelity, so that the glorious experience of encountering her risen Son may be renewed in us each day.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: Why does Jesus delay coming to Lazarus, and what does this reveal about how God works even through moments that seem like loss, absence, or finality?



Heart: Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb, even after all hope seemed lost. What “closed places” in your life — habits, fears, disappointments, or ways of thinking — feel lifeless or stuck at the moment?



Hands: Jesus does not only raise Lazarus; he also tells others, “Unbind him, let him go free.” What step might you take this week — personally or with others — to move toward greater freedom, healing, or new life?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.