

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 129)

ANTIPHON: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

RESPONSE: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

LECTOR: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice! O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading. **R.**

LECTOR: If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive? But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you. **R.**

LECTOR: My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word. My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak. (Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.) **R.**

LECTOR: Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption, Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me will not die for ever. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Everyone who lives and believes in me will not die for ever, says the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45

NEXT WEEK (Passion Sunday, Yr A) Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

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*Jesus is
the true
messiah*



22 March 2026 5th Sunday Lent Year A

What an extraordinary Lenten journey it's been! Five weeks ago, we began with the temptation of Jesus. We heard that Jesus was subjected to tests and trials, just as we are, yet without sinning. The following week, the gospel called for a decision. After his transfiguration, and with the assurance of being God's beloved Son, Jesus faced a difficult choice to journey to Jerusalem. Over the next two weeks, we encountered two unique faith stories.

For the Samaritan woman, faith called her to be an apostle to her village, and for the man blind from birth, faith resulted in him being driven out of his community. Today, we contemplate the reality of death, and Jesus' promise that "whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

The dramatic story of Lazarus' resurrection, is Jesus' last sign and miracle before his own passion and death. In a way, Lazarus' death and resurrection, points to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Both events show that Jesus is the true Messiah. However, while Lazarus was raised to a renewed earthly life, Jesus was raised forever.

Martha and Mary show the vulnerability of faith in the midst of heartache. They have faith, but they demand Jesus' physical presence, which gives rise to a sense of hopelessness when Jesus doesn't arrive in time to prevent Lazarus' death: "If you had been here my brother would not have died." But the promise given is that God's gift of eternal life breaks opens the constraints of mortal life. Jesus says to Lazarus, "Unbind him. Let him go free."

Death is never the end of the road.

'Hopelessness' doesn't exist in the vocabulary of those who believe in the resurrection that Jesus promised. Jesus embraced hopelessness and became hope for the world. Fear loses its control over those who believe in the resurrection. Just as Jesus took away the stone from Lazarus' tomb, he takes away the stones of despair in our lives. Our disappointments, failures, frustrations and losses become the seedbeds of hope and new life.

To Martha, and to us, Jesus poignantly asks: "Do you believe this?" We must never underestimate the power of this question. It's asked of us every time we bury a loved one, and it's central in preparing for our own death. Martha's response to Jesus' question, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ the Son of God," is an extraordinary act of faith in Jesus before his resurrection.

Jesus shows that there is a life beyond the grave, even as our mortal bodies await resurrection at the end of time. While physical life will cease, the God-life (eternal life) that has been given to us through Jesus will never cease. Jesus made eternal life possible for all of us through the gift of his life, and it's already at work in our lives.

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