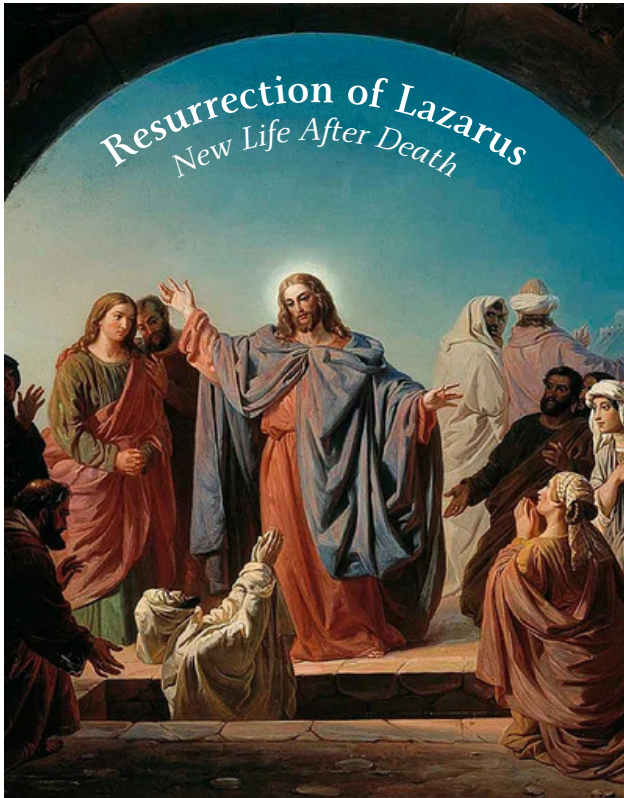




FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

“Listen to the voice of our people”

Readings: 1st Reading: Ez 37:12-14 | Psalm: 129 | 2nd Reading: Rom 8:8-11 | Gospel: Jn 11:1-45

**We Reflect with the Word**

On this fifth Sunday of Lent we are invited to look at the scene in which Jesus goes again to Bethany, to that place of rest, friendship and anointing, but now in a different moment, of mourning after the death of his friend.

John, in his narration, pays careful attention to the details and leads us to witness the pain of the sisters grieving the loss of Lazarus. Both repeat the same phrase to Jesus: “Lord, if you had been here...” There are situations where it seems as if God is not present; we can only see the effects left by the destructive power of humanity.

Jesus himself is deeply grieved and weeps. He is not indifferent to suffering; he experienced loss and embraced death. Likewise, he is moved by the dark panorama we are living: the horror of war, violence, environmental destruction, unjust deportations—these are “illnesses” of our time that lead to death.

Marta's confession of faith stands out with its conviction: “I believe firmly that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who was to come into the world.” The story takes a turn with Jesus' intervention: “Take away the stone.” He asks for the help of the community to set aside what encloses and blocks life, the heavy stones that hinder or limit us.

Finally, he cries out with a loud voice: “Lazarus, come out!” He commands him energetically to leave that state, to move and rise to encounter life. Once again, he asks for support from those present: “Unbind him, and let him go.” The others also play an important role; they free him from his bonds, from the bandages that perhaps they themselves had placed on him.

We Pray with St. Madeleine Sophie:

“If I were given to live a new life, I would only seek to be faithful to the Spirit.”

We Listen to the Voices of Our People...

Many people today experience something similar to what we see in Lazarus. During this Lenten time, we revisit some testimonies from people we encounter in the migrant shelters on Mexico's northern border.

A man deported from California gives thanks to God for being alive: *“Even though I’m no longer where I was before, I’m going to work hard in my country, and I know one day I’ll return with my family.”*

A Cuban woman settling in: *“They have received me with open doors; I’ve been able to rise and continue my path. I’m not alone; I’ve created a family here.”*

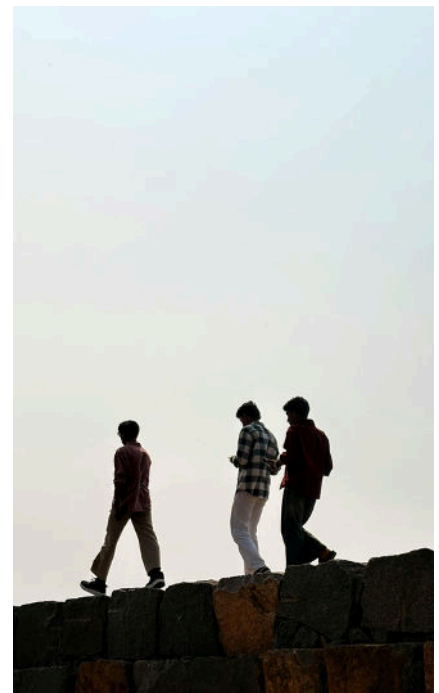
A released prisoner: *“I have a new opportunity at life; I enjoy every day, I see the blessings around me, and I commit to acting from the good.”*

A young person who values life after a suicide attempt: *“It’s like being born again; God gives me the gift of being here. I have a future ahead where I see the light.”*

A person rehabilitated from addiction: *“God helped me free myself from alcohol; I was dead, now I have a new life that I want to live differently.”*

Other voices accompany us: *“Houses for people in situations of mobility should be conceived theologically as ‘places of salvation-healing.’ Not only shelters that protect from immediate danger, but therapeutic communities that facilitate processes of integral restoration. Salvation understood not only in its eschatological dimension, but as present liberation from structures of death. Healing understood not only as the cure of illnesses, but as the reintegration of identities fragmented by trauma.”*

From the Dialectical Methodology of Popular Education, after the process of reflection and analysis comes the final step of ‘Returning to Practice,’ which does not mean going back to the same starting point, but applying the knowledge learned from experience to transform concrete reality—it is to begin anew in a new way.



Questions for Reflection:

What signs of new life and resurrection do we discover in the community?

What aspects of the culture of death are present in our surroundings?

What new beginnings is God inviting us to live?

What must we die to in order to rise?

Closing song: [Christ, Be Our Light](#) – Bernadette Farrell



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