

# Sunday Readings

## 22nd March 2026

### FIRST READING

A reading from Prophet Ezekiel

37:12-14

Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 129:1-8

**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!  
O let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleading. **R/.**

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

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/.**

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

### SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

8:8-11

Brothers and Sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who 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 life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### GOSPEL

John 11:1-45

At that time: A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it he said, 'This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.' After saying these things, he said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.' Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 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 from God, God will give you.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.' When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying 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 also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?' Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, by this time there will be a smell, for he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

# Fifth Sunday of Lent

Lectionary Year A

## The Word of God

## Saint of the Week

The raising of Lazarus is the last and greatest of the seven signs of Jesus reported by St John. Coming immediately before the account of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, it clearly in some ways foreshadows that. So we read it today to help us prepare for Holy Week and Easter. In the sign of the raising of Lazarus we see demonstrated the truth of the words of Jesus: that he has life in himself; that he came to give life; that his life-giving power can overcome even death itself.

The life Jesus came to give is one of the major themes of St John's Gospel. God loved the world so much, John says, that he gave his only begotten Son, so that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (3:16). Or again: These things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. We could cite many other passages: the word "life" occurs over 50 times in this Gospel.

Today's Gospel is often quoted in funeral liturgies, for it points to our belief that Jesus will one day raise all of us from death. It's also important for catechumens preparing for baptism at Easter. For we believe that eternal life with God in Christ is not something confined to the future. On the contrary: in baptism we already pass from death to life; from death in sin to life in God.

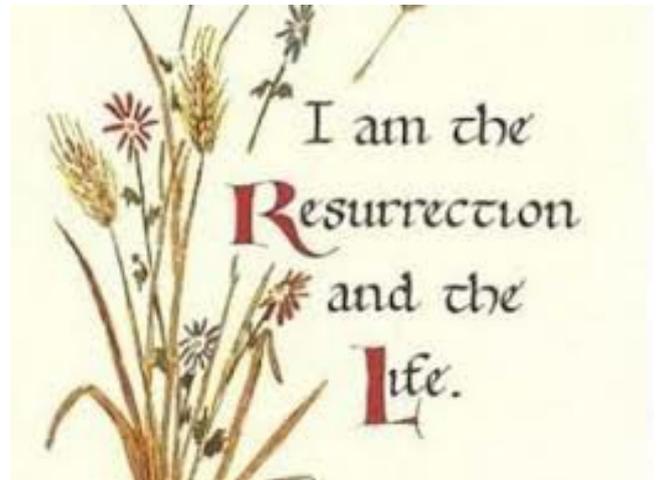
It's typical of John to present these great truths in the form of a drama. The whole account of the raising of Lazarus naturally lends itself to stage performance. And all the ingredients for gripping the attention of an audience are there. The highly dramatic miracle itself is carefully prepared for in a build-up of anticipation. Its backdrop is an atmosphere of murderous tension: readiness to die on the one hand, and to kill on the other. The importance John gives this episode is shown not only by its position, at the turning point of his Gospel, but also by its sheer length: longer than any other Gospel scene, apart from the Passion narrative itself.



**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**St John of Egypt (304 - 94)**

At the age of 25, John left his home and became a monk. He lived under the tutelage of a wise hermit and when his master died, John decided to withdraw into a more remote cave on Mount Lycos. There he lived a very strict life, devoting himself to prayer and manual work. People started to visit him, since he was able to perform miracles, heal the sick and read people's hearts. He died in 394, at the age of 90.



## Prayer of the Week

### Prayer of St. John of the Cross

O blessed Jesus, give me stillness of soul in thee.  
Let thy mighty calmness reign in me;  
rule me, O King of gentleness, King of peace.  
Give me control, great power of self-control,  
control over my words thoughts and actions.  
From all irritability, want of meekness, want of  
gentleness, dear Lord, deliver me.  
By thine own deep patience, give me patience.  
Make me in this and all things  
more and more like thee.

Amen.