

Homily - Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year A)

First Reading - Ezekiel 37:12-14; Second Reading - Romans 8:8-11; Gospel - John 11:1-45

My dear brothers and sisters,

As we come closer to Holy Week, the Church gently leads us deeper into the heart of our faith. Over these past Sundays, we have journeyed from thirst, to sight, and now today to life itself. Today's message is simple but profound: **God brings life where we see only death.** And if we are honest, we don't have to look far to recognise the presence of "death" around us not just physical death, but the quieter forms of it.

Here in our place, many people are carrying heavy burdens. There is anxiety about the cost of living, uncertainty about the future, pressure on families, loneliness among the elderly, and struggles with mental health, especially among the young. Some feel exhausted, others feel forgotten, and many feel stuck. It may not look like a tomb but inside, it can feel like one.

"I will open your graves" In the first reading, the prophet Ezekiel speaks to a people who had lost everything their land, their identity, their hope. They felt like dry bones, lifeless and abandoned. And yet God says something astonishing: **"I will open your graves and bring you back to life."** Not "I might." Not "I'll try." But **"I will."** This is not just about the past. It is about us. Because sometimes we too feel buried: buried under worry, buried under disappointment, buried under grief or regret. Some here today may be carrying silent struggles things no one else sees. Faith may feel weak. Hope may feel distant. But God's promise still stands: **"I will open your grave."**

"Jesus wept" **God who understands us** In the Gospel, we see one of the most moving moments in all Scripture. When Jesus comes to the tomb of Lazarus, He does something unexpected. He weeps Before performing the miracle, before raising Lazarus He shares in the pain. This tells us something very important: God is not distant from our suffering. He enters it. When you feel overwhelmed... When you grieve... When life feels unfair or heavy... God is not standing far away. He is standing beside you, weeping with you.

"Lazarus, come out!" - A call for today Then comes that powerful command: **"Lazarus, come out!"** This is not just a story about one man long ago. This is a call that continues today to each one of us, by name. What are the "tombs" in our lives? For some, it may be: loneliness or isolation addiction or unhealthy habits resentment or unforgiveness fear about the future loss of purpose or meaning And sometimes, in our society, we quietly accept these things as "normal." We learn to live inside the tomb. But Jesus does not accept that. He stands at the entrance of our lives and calls us: **"Come out."** Come out of fear. Come out of despair. Come out of whatever is holding you back from living fully.

We don't come out alone There is something else important in today's Gospel. After Lazarus comes out, still wrapped in burial cloths, Jesus says to the community: **"Untie him and let him go."** This means we are not meant to live this Christian life alone. We need one another. In a time when many in our country feel disconnected, the Church must be a place where:

people are noticed, burdens are shared, and no one is left wrapped in their struggles. Sometimes we are the ones in the tomb. Sometimes we are the ones called to help "unbind" others with kindness, patience, and presence. A simple conversation, a phone call, an act of care these can become instruments of resurrection.

The Spirit who gives life St. Paul reminds us today that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is already living within us. This means resurrection is not only something for the future it begins now. Every time we choose hope over despair, **forgiveness** over bitterness, generosity over selfishness, faith over fear we are already stepping into new life.

As we prepare to enter Holy Week, the Church gives us this Gospel not just to admire, but to live. So today, let us ask ourselves honestly: Where in my life do I feel “buried”? What is Jesus asking me to leave behind? And who might God be asking me to help “unbind”?

In this Eucharist, Jesus once again comes close to us not to judge, but to call us to life. And He says to each one of us, gently but firmly: **“Come out.”**

Amen.