

- As we approach Easter and anticipate Jesus' saving work for us—to save us from the punishment sins against God deserve—and then His resurrection from the dead at Easter, our readings today reinforce our trust in resurrection.
- Ezekiel writes: *“Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have your rise from them...I will put my spirit in you that you may live...I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD”*...and, as I am wont to reiterate to you often, what God has promised cannot NOT be done.
- And not only Ezekiel, but the prophet Isaiah also writes of resurrection: *“Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!”* (Isa 26:19 RSV)
- ...and in the book of Daniel: *“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”* (Dan 12:2 RSV)
- ...which Jesus echoes when He says: *“...all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.”* (John 5:28-29 RSV)
- Then Paul, too, in today's reading: *“...the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also...”*
- And, of course, as is so often reiterated in both the Old and New Testaments, we will be judged by what we have done...whether we have lived our faith in love of God and neighbor.

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- In today's Gospel, Lazarus being brought back to life foreshadows the resurrection (he not resurrected as Jesus was, but would later die again. Jesus is the true first-born from the dead.)
  - So resurrection is certain. And a wise man/woman readies himself for what is certain.
  - How do we do that? As Paul tells us today: by not living in and for the flesh and the desires of the flesh, but living rightly in the

spirit. Not living solely by passions, but according to the direction and Spirit of God...given to us by Christ and His Church.

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- Of all people whom Jesus must have seen dead or dying, why does Jesus bring Lazarus back to life? As a divine sign of the future resurrection, yes...
  - ...but we read in the Gospels that Jesus had a special friendship with the siblings Martha, Mary and Lazarus...and we see the sisters' great faith in Him when they both exclaim: "*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died*"...and Martha adds: "*...even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you...I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.*"
  - This is the same friendship the Christ wants to have with each of us...a faithful, trusting love in Him and in His will.
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- And one thing to note for us in the here and now is that shortest of verses: "*Jesus wept.*"
- He knows that what He's going to do, but nevertheless He empathizes with the sorrow and sadness of His friends.
- Thus we must never think that God doesn't hear our prayers, especially when they are watered with tears. He who loves you so much that He died for you cannot NOT feel our pains and sorrows.
- Does a child weep and his parent not feel the pain? How much more so He who died for love of us.
- And yet...even Jesus' prayer in the garden was not granted...and we wonder how many prayers did His Blessed Mother send up to the Father for His rescue as He carried His cross to Calvary?

- Because the plan of God is always the priority, for it is the greatest of all goods...though our minds are inadequate to perceive the entire tapestry of God's munificent will. In God we trust.
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- People always have questions about the resurrection: what will it be like. Will this or that happen? In what order? What will be able to do? Etc.”
- But why worry about details? Just concern yourself with living a life worthy of Heaven, and leave the rest to God.
- As Jesus was like us in life, so we will we be like Him in the resurrection.
- What matters far above all else will be the eternal joy of the vision of God...to behold God—beauty itself...all justice, all mercy, all love...and Jesus assures us that those who attain eternal life will be “...as the angels of God in Heaven.” (Matthew 22:30)
- And thus those born into eternal life will be incapable of physical OR spiritual suffering, for “*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes...no mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more...*” (Revelation 21:4)
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- It is pointless to worry about when and where; Jesus assures us that we can know neither the day nor the hour of His coming.
- Simply live life like Martha, Mary and Lazarus...in close friendship with Jesus...for, as the scriptures assure us many times, “*Before a man are life and death; he is given whichever he chooses.*” (Sirach 15:17)
- And...as Moses said to the Israelites: Choose life...so that you may live in God's love forever. (cf. Deuteronomy 30:19)

**Reading 1** [Ez 37:12-14](#)

Thus says the Lord GOD:

O my people, I will open your graves

and have you rise from them,

and bring you back to the land of Israel.

Then you shall know that I am the LORD,

when I open your graves and have you rise from them,

O my people!

I will put my spirit in you that you may live,

and I will settle you upon your land;

thus you shall know that I am the LORD.

I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD.

**Responsorial Psalm** [Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8](#)

**R. (7) With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

LORD, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to my voice in supplication.

**With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,

LORD, who can stand?

But with you is forgiveness,

that you may be revered.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

I trust in the LORD;

my soul trusts in his word.

More than sentinels wait for the dawn,

let Israel wait for the LORD.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

For with the LORD is kindness

and with him is plenteous redemption;

And he will redeem Israel

from all their iniquities.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

**Reading 2** [Rom 8:8-11](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh;

on the contrary, you are in the spirit,  
if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.

**Whoever 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 alive because of righteousness.

**If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,  
the one who raised Christ from the dead  
will give life to your mortal bodies also,  
through his Spirit dwelling in you.**

**Gospel** [Jn 11:1-45](#) or [11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45](#)

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany,  
the village of Mary and her sister Martha.  
Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil  
and dried his feet with her hair;  
it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.  
So the sisters sent word to him saying,  
“Master, the one you love is ill.”  
When Jesus heard this he said,  
“This illness is not to end in death,  
but is for the glory of God,  
that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”  
Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.  
So when he heard that he was ill,  
he remained for two days in the place where he was.  
Then after this he said to his disciples,  
“Let us go back to Judea.”  
The disciples said to him,  
“Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you,  
and you want to go back there?”  
Jesus answered,  
“Are there not twelve hours in a day?  
If one walks during the day, he does not stumble,  
because he sees the light of this world.  
But if one walks at night, he stumbles,  
because the light is not in him.”  
He said this, and then told them,  
“Our friend Lazarus is asleep,  
but I am going to awaken him.”  
So the disciples said to him,

“Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved.”  
But Jesus was talking about his death,  
while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep.  
So then Jesus said to them clearly,  
“Lazarus has died.  
And I am glad for you that I was not there,  
that you may believe.  
Let us go to him.”  
So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples,  
“Let us also go to die with him.”

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus  
had already been in the tomb for four days.  
Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away.  
And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary  
to comfort them about their brother.  
When Martha heard that Jesus was coming,  
she went to meet him;  
but Mary sat at home.  
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 of God,  
God will give you.”  
Jesus said to her,  
“Your brother will rise.”  
Martha said to him,  
“I know he will rise,  
in the resurrection on the last day.”  
Jesus told her,  
“I am the resurrection and the life;  
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,  
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.  
Do you believe this?”  
She said to him, “Yes, Lord.  
I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God,  
the one who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this,  
she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying,  
“The teacher is here and is asking for you.”

As soon as she heard this,  
she rose quickly and went to him.  
For Jesus had not yet come into the village,  
but was still where Martha had met him.  
So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her  
saw Mary get up quickly and go out,  
they followed her,  
presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there.  
When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him,  
she fell at his feet and said 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 weeping,  
he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said,  
“Where have you laid him?”  
They said to him, “Sir, come and see.”  
And Jesus wept.  
So the Jews said, “See how he loved him.”  
But some of them said,  
“Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man  
have done something so that this man would not have died?”

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb.  
It was a cave, and a stone lay across it.  
Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”  
Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him,  
“Lord, by now there will be a stench;  
he has been dead for four days.”  
Jesus said to her,  
“Did I not tell you that if you believe  
you will see the glory of God?”  
So they took away the stone.  
And Jesus raised his eyes and said,  
“Father, I thank you for hearing me.  
I know that you always hear me;  
but because of the crowd here I have said this,  
that they may believe that you sent me.”  
And when he had said this,  
He cried out in a loud voice,  
“Lazarus, come out!”  
The dead man came out,

tied hand and foot with burial bands,  
and his face was wrapped in a cloth.  
So Jesus said to them,  
“Untie him and let him go.”

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary  
and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

**or**

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