

Fifth Sunday of Lent - Year A

[Ezek. 37:12-4; Rom. 8:8-11; Jn. 11:1-45]
Excerpts of Lenten Weekly Reflections – Share Lent 2026
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Brothers and sisters, on this fifth Sunday of Lent, the Word of God presents us with two powerful images of life snatched from death: the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel and the tomb of Lazarus in Bethany. Both speak of situations that seem hopeless, where life has withdrawn and only inert matter remains. Yet in both cases, God does not allow death to have the last word.

Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord addresses a people in exile who feel like a nation already buried: “I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people” (Ezekiel 37:12). Israel is not only wounded or discouraged; it is as if dead. Exile, oppression and humiliation have drained the people of their breath. But God promises more than comfort: he promises resurrection. “I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live” (Ezekiel 37:14). Life returns when God breathes his Spirit into what seemed lost forever.

This prophecy does not concern only ancient Israel. It applies to all situations where systems of exploitation, violence or neglect reduce people to “dry bones,” deprived of dignity, voice and hope. Entire communities today live as if locked in a tomb: crushed by ecological destruction, forced displacement, debt or economic structures that prioritize profit at the expense of people. Their lands are ravaged, their rivers polluted, their ways of life stifled. From the outside, one might think that nothing new can sprout there.

In this reality, the Gospel of the resurrection of Lazarus resonates with the same force. Jesus does not remain distant from death. He goes to Bethany, stands before a sealed tomb, and weeps. His tears are not a sign of weakness, but of divine compassion. Before calling Lazarus out of the tomb, Jesus accepts the pain of Martha, Mary and the whole community. He enters into their mourning. Then he cries out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43). The one who was bound by funeral bandages comes out of the tomb. But the story does not end there. Jesus turns to those around him and says, “Unbind him, and let him go” (John 11:44). The miracle involves the community. They must help remove the signs of death and return Lazarus to life among his own.

This is where the Word connects with our mission. We are called to untie others. Faith in the God of life cannot remain abstract. It draws us to those whose lives have been emptied by unjust systems, communities wounded by extractive industries, environmental degradation, crushing poverty and exclusion.

On this Sunday of solidarity, as we reflect on ecological justice and the work of partners who accompany affected communities.

We hear Jesus's command to us: "Untie them." Support, advocacy, generosity and faithful presence are ways to help roll away the stone from modern tombs. When we stand alongside communities living along exploited territories and routes, when we denounce structures that poison both the earth and people, we participate in God's promise. The spirituality of giving is participation in the very action of God who breathes life where there is death. Every act of generosity, every step *On Track for Justice*, becomes a small resurrection, a sign that the Spirit is always at work.

Lent leads us to the cross, where death seems to triumph. But already today, amid the dry bones and open tombs, we are reminded that God raises the dead. And he invites us to be, with Christ, servants of life.

Every year, Development and Peace — Caritas Canada's Share Lent campaign invites us to learn more about these projects and support them with our generosity. This gives us an opportunity to follow the example of Jesus, who, Pope Leo XIV says, "identified himself with the lowest ranks of society" and "confirms the dignity of every human being" through his love.

By standing in solidarity with society's neglected people whom Development and Peace — Caritas Canada serves, we can walk in Christ's footsteps, mirror his loving regard, and bring our relationship with him and our faith to fruition.

Brothers and sisters, may this eucharist renew in us the joy of not feeling alone and the call to bring light into the darkness that surrounds us.