

March 22, 2026

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ez 37:12-14 | Rom 8:8-11 | Jn 11:1-45

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

The raising of Lazarus marks an irreversible turning point in Jesus' ministry. It's impossible to publicly raise someone from the dead and continue to fly beneath the radar. It's no surprise that the next time we meet Jesus, he'll be greeted with Hosannas and palm branches as the promised Son of David. But we also know that by raising Lazarus, Jesus attracts the attention of his enemies and sets himself on a course that ultimately leads to the cross. In our own life of discipleship, there may be times when we will have to step up and make a decisive and public choice for our faith or our values. Standing up for what's right may bring praise and admiration, or lead to misunderstanding or even persecution. We can draw strength in these decisive moments from the knowledge that the One we follow is the resurrection and the life. Any risk we take in following him is worth it in the end.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel passage features the shortest and perhaps one of the most profound verses in all of Scripture: "And Jesus wept." This text reveals that before he restored his friend to life, we have a God who weeps with us over the losses and tragedies of our lives. Likewise, before we can announce the Good News of the Gospel, we must learn the "art of accompaniment," as Pope Francis reminded us in *Evangelii Gaudium*. (169) This requires that we offer "our closeness and our compassionate gaze" to all those we seek to evangelize. When our first action consists of compassion, empathy, and entering into the joys and sorrows of others, our efforts at evangelization will bear much fruit.

INVITATION

St. Paul tells us to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Rom 12:15) As we enter the final week of Lent and prepare for Holy Week, spend some time thinking about who in your life is experiencing a particular moment of joy or sorrow at this time. Consider one concrete action you can take to be present to them: it could be dropping off a meal to someone who recently had surgery, sitting with someone who lost a loved one and listening as they share stories of their lives together, or bringing a special treat to celebrate a friend's recent accomplishment. Then - do it.

