



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)
March 22, 2026

Called from the Pits

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

When I feel sorry for myself or just down in the dumps, when I feel buried by life not going the way I think it should, sometimes I remember to stop thinking about myself and my problems, and I say to myself, I need to go care about someone else. It seems that doing so pulls me out of that tomb of darkness and back into the light. Then, I ask myself, Why didn't I do that sooner? The truth is, I don't remember. But the

very fact that I eventually do remember is the Spirit of God dwelling within me that pulls me back into life, just as St. Paul once wrote. (See Romans 8:9–13.) It's like hearing a voice calling me out of a dreary tomb of death, just as sure as Lazarus heard Jesus calling him out.

Have you experienced times when your spirit feels deader than dead, but then someone or something calls you back into life? I have. When that happens to us, I think we've been blessed with a hint of the resurrection. When I find myself wondering if there is really life beyond death, if resurrection really does happen to us, I think about all the times when what I thought was a death turned out to be some unexpected doorway to new life. If that happens with such little deaths along the way, wouldn't it also happen on our last day on this earth? †

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 37:12–14

You shall know that I am the **LORD**, when I open your graves and make you come up out of them, my people!

Romans 8:8–11

The one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.

John 11:1–45 or John 11:3–7, 17, 20–27, 33b–45

Jesus told [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live."



There are times when a little death turns out to be an unexpected doorway to new life.

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

A very widespread ailment of our time is the fatigue of living: reality seems to us to be too complex, burdensome, difficult to face. And so we switch off, we fall asleep.... But reality has to be faced.... Let us go to Jesus: he can heal us, he can revive us. Jesus is our hope!

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME,
JUNE 25, 2025



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- What "little deaths" have you experienced?
- Did any of them bring new possibilities?



Lazarus, Come Out!

Paige Byrne Shortal

There's a wonderful line in Leif Enger's novel, *Peace Like a River*: "Drat, thought dying Lazarus—this part again." Lazarus, sometimes called "the man who died twice," was not resurrected

to new life, but only brought back to this life. He had to die again. There are so many little deaths along the way, so many rehearsals for our final death.

Drat, thought the woman, as she discovered another lump—this part again.

Drat, thought the physician, as he studied the x-rays of a favorite patient—this part again.

Drat, thought the parents, as they paced the floor at 2:00 AM—this part again.

Drat, thought the teenager, as he crept into the house after curfew—this part again.

Drat, thought the man, as he opened another bill—this part again.

Drat, thought the forever-dieting woman, as she stepped on the scale—this part again.

Drat, thought the preacher, as the worshipers looked hopeful or impatient or bored—this part again.

Drat, thought the woman, as she came home to find her husband with a bottle—this part again.

Drat, thought the man, as he stared into reddened eyes in the morning-after mirror—this part again.

Drat, thought the couple, as their harsh words came unbidden, and the evening was lost to loneliness—this part again.

Drat, thought the president and the generals and the soldiers and the loved ones of the soldiers, as the alarms sounded—this part again.

Drat, thought Jesus, as he fell for the third time—this part again.

No problem, no death, is too petty or too overwhelming for Jesus. We can bring it all to him. He is the one who wept with his friends as they mourned, and he weeps with us. He is the one who called Lazarus from his tomb, and he calls us, too. "Come out!" he cries. "Live!" †

From "The Word in Our World," *Liguorian*, November 2009. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "The Church Walks with Migrants" by Fr. Michael McAndrew, CSsR

Although the bishops, in their special message, "recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders," they also "advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together." Their message is one of solidarity with the immigrants as they express that they are "disturbed [to] see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety" and "saddened by...the vilification of immigrants."

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

PRAYER

So that we may have the courage to heed your call to come out of the darkness, we pray—

Lord, let us be like you.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 23-28

Monday, Lenten Weekday: Dn 13:1-9,
15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41c-62 /
Jn 8:1-11

Tuesday, Lenten Weekday: Nm 21:4-9 /
Jn 8:21-30

Wednesday, The Annunciation of the Lord:
Is 7:10-14; 8:10 / Heb 10:4-10 / Lk 1:26-38

Thursday, Lenten Weekday: Gn 17:3-9 /
Jn 8:51-59

Friday, Lenten Weekday: Jer 20:10-13 /
Jn 10:31-42

Saturday, Lenten Weekday: Ez 37:21-28 /
Jn 11:45-56