

SUNDAY APR. 2, 2017

FIFTH SUNDAY
OF LENT

1. EZEKIEL 37:12-14
2. ROMANS 8:8-11
3. JOHN 11:1-45 OR JOHN 11: 3-7, 17, 20-27, 33B-45

GOSPEL RELATED: CCC 545, 589, 1423, 1439, 1443, 1468, 1700, 1846, 2795, 2839



FOCUS: WE ARE ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.

Two weeks from today is Easter Sunday. As we draw close to the end of our annual Lenten preparation, we are presented with a collection of some of the most powerful readings the Church has on any given Sunday. As we journey through these last days of Lent, we are comforted with the good news of Jesus as the resurrection and the life, so that we can truly be alive in the Spirit, because of the righteousness that Jesus has provided for us.

God's promise, which we heard in the first reading from Ezekiel, is fulfilled through the actions of Jesus in today's Gospel. It is important that we focus on the wonder of God's love, rather than on being raised from the dead in the future. God has given us the greatest gift ever – the gift of life. Certainly, the day will come when our graves will be

opened, as Ezekiel prophesied, and, like Lazarus, we will hear the words of Jesus telling us to come out. But for now, listen to these words of St. Paul: You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit ... if Christ is in you ... the Spirit is alive because of righteousness.

What does it mean to live the words "you are not in the flesh ... you are in the Spirit"? We know that we are in the flesh. We get headaches. We have heart attacks. We all have sorrows. We all have joys. How can we say that we are in the Spirit? As we live these words, we are invited to go back to a very early and profound message of Christianity: The hope of eternal life for which we are longing is really being lived today. If we are going to live the life of the Spirit, then that life of the Spirit must lead us to a life of hope – today.

While the promise of resurrection for our bodies is so wonderful for each of us, we know all too well that it will occur at the end of time. One cannot live a resurrected life unless one is living a life of hope in today's world. One cannot expect to be raised to new life, unless one can die to self today. We are called to answer God's invitation to come out of our self-centeredness and live in grace. As we live the life of Jesus, the resurrection and the life, let's be open to living lives of hope. Through our faith in Christ and baptism into him, each of us is "not in the flesh" but, rather, "we are in the Spirit." Have a blessed last two weeks of Lent, and may we welcome the promise of hope given in and through Jesus.

faith
CATHOLIC

FAITH Catholic offers *Daily Homilies* as a subscription service for priests and deacons. Complete homilies for Sunday and weekday Masses can be preached as written or used as inspiration for your original homilies. To learn more or subscribe to *Daily Homilies*, visit store.faithcatholic.com. We are thankful for your vocation!