

Homily Summary – 5th Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Short Overview

On this Passion Sunday (Fifth Sunday of Lent), as we enter the final two-week stretch of Lent known as Passiontide, we reflect on the raising of Lazarus. We might examine how our Lenten journey is going and how we're invited (all of us, not just the Elect who are preparing for baptism) to allow Christ to raise us up from spiritual death and draw us closer to the way of life God calls us to.

Main Points

- *Veiling of statues:* We have now entered Passiontide, the last two weeks of Lent. Many churches veil statues and sacred images as a form of “visual fast,” helping us focus more deeply on the mystery of Christ’s Passion. The beauty of the images will be joyfully unveiled again at Easter.
- *Lenten resolution check-in:* It is a good time to check in on our Lenten resolutions. How is my prayer, fasting, and almsgiving going? Am I growing closer to God?
- *God weeps with us:* In the Gospel, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Even though Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus and that he would one day be with Him in Heaven, Jesus still wept. This shows us that Jesus understands our grief, sorrow, and loss.
- *“Scrutinizing” our own hearts:* The Third Scrutiny reminds us that we are all called to let Christ raise us up. We are invited to look honestly within our own hearts and ask where we need new life.
- *Reconciliation raises us:* The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a powerful way to experience this “raising up” during these final weeks of Lent.
- *Mary’s example:* Mary, the Mother of God, stands as a beautiful example for us - her perfect trust, sorrow at the foot of the Cross, and total openness to God’s will.

Key Bible Verses

- *John 11:1-45* - The Raising of Lazarus (especially John 11:35 “Jesus wept” and Jesus’ command “Lazarus, come out!”)
- *John 11:25-26* - “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live.”

Catechism References

- CCC 2717 - Contemplative prayer is silence, “the symbol of the world to come” - fitting for the veiled statues and deeper interior focus of Passiontide.
- CCC 1431 - Interior penance includes sorrow for sins and a firm purpose of amendment, which the scrutinies and Reconciliation help bring about.
- CCC 618 - We are called to unite our sufferings with the Passion of Christ.

Reflection Questions

- How are my Lenten resolutions going so far? Where have I succeeded, and where do I need to renew my efforts in these final two weeks?
- What “dead” areas in my life (habits, fears, relationships, or sins) is Jesus calling me to let Him raise up?
- When I experience grief, sadness, or loss, do I remember that Jesus wept with His friends and walks with me in my pain?
- How can I imitate Mary’s example of trust and surrender during this Passiontide?
- In what ways can the Sacrament of Reconciliation help me experience the new life Jesus offers?

Rhyme summary:

We now approach the holiest of weeks, as this Lent we are called to the highest and holiest peaks.
We are lifted from death by the love of Jesus Christ, as we strive ever higher to love Him aright.
With Mary's own prayers we love her Son still more, aware that His love always waits at the door.
So striving to love God more too, that's our reason, that renewed in God's love we continue this sacred season.

Some Scriptural reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>