

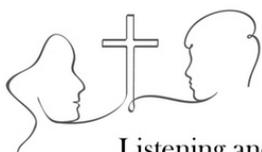
FIFTH  
SUNDAY

*Pastoral kit*

LENT

2026

*March 22<sup>th</sup>*



Listening and Fasting  
LENT AS A TIME OF CONVERSION

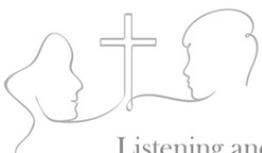
## POINTS FOR REFLECTION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

### Introduction

Today's Gospel presents us with a God who does not shy away from sorrow. Jesus weeps, moved with compassion, and enters his friend's tomb. He does not come to deny death, but to tell us that death does not have the last word. There are times when we too feel trapped, with no way out. Jesus does not shout at us from outside: he enters in and calls us by name. Lent reaches its high point here: in allowing ourselves to be called by name and to live anew.

### Suggested songs

- I Know that my Redeemer Lives
- I am the Bread of Life
- O Cross of Christ, Immortal Tree
- The Glory of these Forty Days
- We Walk by Faith

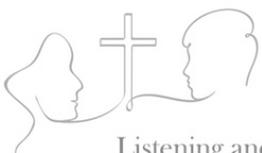


## Prayer of the Faithful

1. **For the Church:** That it may be a credible witness that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, bringing people hope in the face of death and despair. We pray to the Lord.
2. **For leaders and peace:** That in the face of injustice and inequality, they may have the courage to choose life and the paths of justice and peace. We pray to the Lord.
3. **For those who have been or are close to death:** For the terminally ill, for those who have attempted suicide and for those sentenced to death; that they may feel the Lord's caress as he calls them by name. We pray to the Lord.
4. **For the catechumens:** That, in receiving the gift of faith, they may feel that their life's story is opening up to a path of eternal life and joy. We pray to the Lord.
5. **For our community:** That we may learn to fast from judgements that kill and to nourish ourselves with the Word that raises us up, becoming witnesses of new life for our brothers and sisters. We pray to the Lord.

### PRAYER ON THE THEME OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus, Your tears embrace our sorrow and Your voice calls us to life. Give us all that leads us to You and take away from us all that distances us from You, so that we may emerge from our darkness and bear witness with joy that You are the Resurrection and the Life, today and always.



IDEAS FOR THE HOMILY

### Pastoral approach

Jesus does not arrive in time. Lazarus is already dead. And this leaves us feeling disoriented, because sooner or later we all experience a God who seems to arrive too late.

There are dead-end situations, unspoken words, broken relationships, and sorrows that have gone unanswered. And the Gospel does not deny them. Jesus does not avoid pain: he weeps, he is moved, he enters his friend's tomb.

Christian faith is not believing that pain does not exist, but refusing to think that it is the end. Within every tomb, Jesus continues to speak a word that echoes through the ages: "Come out."

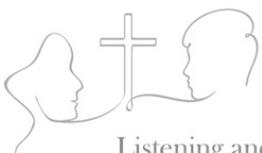
It is here that Lent reaches its deepest meaning: not with an explanation, but with a call. To let oneself be called by name and to return to life, even when all seems lost.



### Biblical approach

In the story of Lazarus, Jesus reveals both his humanity and his divinity. He weeps as a man, yet he commands the dead to rise as the Lord of life.

The question Jesus posed to Martha - "*Do you believe this?*" - is not a theological test, but a call to trust. To believe does not mean to understand everything, but to entrust oneself to God. Lazarus emerging from the tomb is an icon of the new creation: God does not erase death, but passes through it and transforms it. Love is stronger than any stone; it has the power to open paths where we can only see a dead end.



RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN



## Reflection

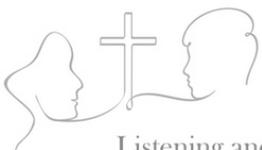
Today in the Gospel, Jesus does something wonderful: he calls Lazarus, his friend, and says to him, “Come out!” And Lazarus comes back to life.

This helps us understand something important: for Jesus, nothing is too sad and nothing is over forever. Sometimes, even in our hearts, everything seems to stand still, as if it were winter: a sadness, a worry, an anger that weighs us down like a stone. Jesus comes close to us, just as he did with Lazarus, and says to us: “Come out, there is life for you.”

That is why we place flowers near the prayer corner, to remind us that with Jesus, life always blossoms anew. And we take a stone to cast away whatever makes our hearts sad or heavy. In this way, we make room for the joy of Jesus, who wants us to be alive, free, and happy.

## Activities

- **The Prayer Corner:** Place a bouquet of fresh flowers to remind us that life always blossoms anew after winter.
- **The Cry of Life:** Write on a stone the name of a worry or a sadness we wish to leave with Jesus. Move the stone away from the prayer corner, making room for the joy of Jesus.



## RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### Reflection

In today's Gospel, we contemplate Jesus arriving when Lazarus is already dead. He arrives late, at least by our standards. Martha and Mary do not hide their disappointment: "If only you had been here..." It is a phrase that, at times, we too repeat in our hearts, when something comes to an end, or a prayer goes unanswered.

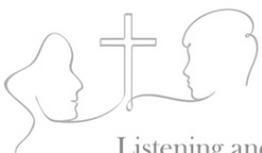
Jesus does not rebuke this struggle, nor does he judge it. He stays, listens, and weeps. Before every miracle, there is a God who welcomes our questions.

Today we are not seeking answers, but speaking the truth. Because even when God seems late, he never stops coming to us.

### Activities

- **"When God seems to be late":** Guiding questions (in small groups):
  - Have you ever felt that God was "late"?
  - Is there a situation you are experiencing today that makes you feel there is no way out?
  - Who is a "Martha" or a "Mary" to you (who hopes, who has difficulty believing)?

The aim of the activity is to listen to what others have to say, without needing to give them answers or solutions. We conclude this time of sharing by recalling that: "Jesus does not always arrive when we want him to, but he always keeps his word and never disappoints us."



RESOURCES FOR ADULTS



## Reflection

In today's Gospel we meet two sisters, Martha and Mary. They both love Jesus, but react differently in the face of grief. Martha goes to meet Jesus with poignant words: she believes, but carries within her a burning question. Mary remains still, lost in tears, speechless. Jesus does not correct either of them. He does not ask Martha to be less harsh, nor does he ask Mary to be stronger. He stays with both of them, listens to both, and calls them back to life.

This Gospel tells us that there is no 'right' way to suffer, but there is a God who enters into every form of pain. That is why today we do not seek explanations, but recognise who we are before God and learn to do, with others, what Jesus does with us: to be present, to listen, and not to flee.

## Activities

- **“Martha and Mary within us”.** In small groups, share about these questions:
  - In what moments do I recognise myself in Martha (clear-headed, yet wounded)?
  - When, on the other hand, am I Mary (paralysed by grief)?
  - Which of Jesus' words speaks to me most today?
- **Informal Encounters:** This week, intentionally 'approach' someone who is suffering or who has drifted away from the Church, asking them sincerely, 'How are you?' and listening to what God is saying in what they have to share.

