**5th SUNDAY OF LENT [6th April, 2014]**

READINGS: Ezekiel 37:12-14 / Romans 8:8-11 / John 11: 1-45

THEME: JESUS, OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

Beloved in Christ, we understood from last Sunday’s gospel reading that by giving sight to the man born blind, our Lord meant to teach us that He is the light of the world (Jn. 9:5). Similarly, by raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus Christ teaches us that He is ‘THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE’ (Jn. 11:25).

Centuries before the birth and ministry of Jesus, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision of a valley full of dry bones. Eventually, in the vision, God gave new life to the dry bones (Ezek. 37:1-10). In today’s first reading we find the meaning of the vision: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them ….Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live…’" (Ezek. 37:12-14).

Jesus is the one who has come to fulfill this vision. Indeed, He offers mankind something more excellent than was revealed in the vision. For Jesus does not only give life to dead bones (e.g. He raised the dead Lazarus), He gives supernatural life to our souls. He gives a new life beyond this earth – a new life beyond description. Lazarus, who was raise back to life on this earth, died again. That is, a new life for only this earth will eventually end. But the good news is that Jesus is offering us the resurrection from the dead unto a new life in heaven that never ends. It is ever-lasting life – eternal life!

Normally, goods of high quality are more expensive than those of cheap quality (for now don’t think of the fraudsters who can deceive a person into buying a cheap product at a high price). Similarly, giving resurrection and eternal life to the dead cost Jesus more than it takes Him to bring dead persons back to this (earthly) life. Thus, before travelling to Bethany to raise Lazarus, He told his disciples: "Our friend **Lazarus has fallen asleep**; but I am going there to wake him up" (Jn. 11:11). And when He eventually got to the tomb, He brought Lazarus back to life by simply calling out: “Lazarus, come out!” (Jn. 11:43). That is, for Jesus, raising Lazarus back to this earthly life was as simple as waking up a person from sleep. However, to offer us the resurrection that leads to new life in heaven, He had to shed His blood on the cross.

Beloved, hearing this message two weeks before Easter means that God is reminding us: firstly, to soberly meditate and appreciate the price Jesus had to pay for our salvation; secondly, to appreciate the inestimable value of the resurrection and heavenly life; and thirdly, to renew our faith in Jesus, who assures us: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (Jn. 11:25-26). Amen!