

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

5th SUNDAY IN LENT - GOD WILL NEVER ABANDON HIS PEOPLE



We are approaching the end of Lent. The Word of God for this Sunday offers us a glimpse of the JOY of EASTER the Victory of Life over death. We are invited to share in this victory by committing ourselves to the service of Peace and Life. This text is very brief, yet it clearly forms a cohesive whole: it is framed by two similar expressions at the beginning, **"Thus says the LORD God,"** and at the end, **"The Word of the LORD."** This framework obviously serves to lend Solemnity to the message it encloses. Whenever a prophet deems it necessary to reiterate that he is speaking on behalf of the LORD, it is because his message is of particular importance and may be difficult to hear.

The message of today, therefore, is precisely what lies within this frame: **it is a promise, repeated twice, addressed to God's people for God says, "O my people."** On both occasions, the promise centers on two specific points: **first, "I will open your graves"; and second, "I will bring you back to the land of Israel" or, "I will give you rest in your own land"** which amounts to the same thing.

Thus, the expression **"I will open your graves" signifies that God will raise His people up.** Indeed, this entire vision along with the explanation we have read today evokes the Captivity of the exiled people and their Restoration by God. For the prophet Ezekiel, this is an absolute certainty: **the people cannot be annihilated, for God has promised them an Eternal Covenant that nothing can ever destroy.**

"I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU, AND YOU SHALL LIVE"

Here, then, there is no room for doubt; the repetition of the phrase **"O my people" clearly demonstrates that these two promises herald a resurgence, a restoration of the people.** This certainty that God never abandons humanity did not emerge all at once; rather, it developed in step with the concrete events of the Chosen People's History. Israel's experience is that of a God Who liberates Humanity, Who desires human beings to be free from every form of servitude, and Who ceaselessly intervenes to set them free a Faithful God who never goes back on His word. It is this Faith that guides all of Israel's discoveries; it is their driving force. Through this biblical text, we already gain a glimpse of the concept of Resurrection. The Gospel, too, speaks to us of **a God who "comes forth."**

Just as in the days of Moses, the Lord sees the misery of His people, and He sends us forth to liberate them from all that destroys them. **The Gospel for this Sunday invites us to witness Lazarus's emergence from his tomb. Through this extraordinary gesture, Jesus fully demonstrates His power over death.** The disciples know that this ascent toward Jerusalem is a march toward death. Yet, despite their disbelief He seeks to help them understand that this journey will culminate in the **Victory of Life.** Today, that same Christ relies on us to participate in this **Work of Liberation.** Many of our brothers and sisters are, in a sense, as if they were locked away in tombs. We think of all those who are oppressed, unemployed, hungry, or ill. We believe that the Lord can open these tombs. But we also know that His word and His action are channeled through our own commitments.

Very Rev. Fr. Lucien Eugene Pierre Ph.D., Pastor, VF

Dean of Northwest Broward Deanery of the Archdiocese Miami – March 15, 2026