



## ***5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY of LENT*** ***YEAR B (YEAR A READINGS)– March 18, 2018***

Today we celebrate the fifth Sunday of lent. Because of the Scrutinies with our RCIA Candidates, the Readings from Scripture for Year A are used at Mass.

In the Scripture readings, we are reminded again that Lent is a penitential season - a time to call to mind our sins - resolve to let them go - a time to do penance - and make a firm purpose of amendment.

Ezekiel (Ez 37:12-14) reminds us that God has put his spirit in us. Wherever we go people should be able to see the presence of Jesus within us. He is the candle, we are the mirrors that reflect him. At least that's the way it's supposed to be.

St. Paul reminds us that the spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, is the same spirit that dwells in us. Reflecting on that reality alone, can give us enough food for thought for a whole week's retreat and then some.

The gospel reading for year A (John 11:1-45) reminds us that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. We are reminded too that Jesus can raise up people who are spiritually dead. That's why during this holy season of Lent we reflect on our own spiritual health and identify those areas in our lives where we need healing.

Remember when Jesus said you don't put new wine in old wine skins - his teaching was not accepted by the scribes and Pharisees - because he pointed out their hypocrisy - and he said that God's laws are more important than the rituals that they were imposing on their people. The scribes and the Pharisees were the old wine skins and their manmade rules were the old wine.

Sometimes we get all caught up in our own little rituals and personal devotions and when people do not worship God exactly the way we do - some of us tend to put them down as less Catholic or less holy. Jesus says, "That's wrong"

This is the week for the third scrutiny of the elect who are members of our RCIA program. Each of them has been asked to reflect on their own lives to see what must be changed if they want to follow Jesus more closely. It's also good for us to reflect on our own lives. What are the things we must change if we want to follow Jesus more closely?

Just as Jesus gave new life to Lazarus when he raised him from the dead, so too can he give us new life and growth when we remove whatever sins keep us in the spiritual grave of separation from God. With deep and thoughtful prayer, look at the Commandments, the Precepts of the Church and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Is there a need for change in your life? When anything stops growing, it's dead

<b>KNOWING</b> +	<b>SHOWING</b> =	<b>GROWING</b>
1. Jesus is God and Savior	1. Bible Reading	1. Goodness
2. You share in the divine nature	2. Family Order	2. Knowledge
3. You can do all that God commands	3. Scripture Memorization	3. Self-Control
	4. Soul Journaling	4. Perseverance
	5. Praying & Worshipping	5. Godliness
	6. Discipleship & Christlikeness	6. Mutual Affection
	7. Christian Service	7. Love
	8. Public Evangelism	8. Joy
	9. Spiritual Meditation	9. Peace
	10. Financial Stewardship	10. Patience
	11. Christian Fellowship	11. Kindness
	12. Church Involvement	12. Gentleness

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH**