

Thoughts on the Readings of March 26, 2023

The Common Thread A valley of long-dead bones is revived. A dead man is raised from the grave. And we too, who were dead in our sins, dead men walking in this flesh, are raised to new life in Christ. But this happens, not because a prophet spoke or even because the Lord said, “Come forth,” but because the Son of Man died for the world, becoming the resurrection and the life to everyone who believes.

First Reading - [Ezekiel 37:1–14](#) Archeologists are always digging up bones. Though housed in museums, the bones remain very dead. The bones are then strung together in an effort to display beings that once lived. But those skeletons still remain quite dead. In our lesson today, God, like a sort of curator, leads Ezekiel through a huge museum: a valley of dead bones. The bones on display were at the point of desiccation. But without even bothering to first string the bones together, God breathed his Spirit into the desiccated bones and they were brought to life. They weren't just partially reanimated, like zombies in a Hollywood movie. They truly lived again. Just so, God will raise the Church, the Israel of God ([Gal. 6:16](#)), and we will know that God is the Lord. He has spoken; he will do it.

Psalms - [Psalm 130:1–8](#) The remorseful person cries out to God, acknowledging two things. He is convinced that all are sinners, that no one could stand before God if he kept track of their wickedness. He is equally confident that God is merciful. God is forgiving of the penitent. The word of God says it is so, and the contrite heart waits for redemption, certain of his hope in God. Nowhere in the text does it mention doing anything about one's sin. Instead, one is to wait — in other words, to have faith in the grace of God alone.

Second Reading - [Romans 8:1–11](#) While we are still in this sinful flesh, we always feel the tug of concupiscence. We have urges. Yet, those who walk according to the Spirit of God have a higher aim. We do not always attain it, of course, for we are still in this dead body of desire. But God in Christ has hit the mark for us. In sending his perfect Son in the same flesh as our own, he condemned all flesh to

its rightful death ([Rom. 6:23](#)). Now, though we often fail while yet in this flesh, our aim is higher. Our minds — that is, our new urges — are set on the things of God. Instead of being steered by concupiscence, we are guided by what we might call “conspirite.” Our new desires come from the life-giving Spirit of God. Although our flesh remains dead, the Spirit of God now dwells in us. If the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, God will raise us just as he raised his Son, who died in his flesh for our mortal bodies.

Gospel - [John 11:1-45, 46-53](#) Lazarus is the perfect example of what God in Christ has done for us. Many wonder why Jesus tarried before going to his dying friend Lazarus. Though it pained him to linger, perhaps he did so to show us what he would also do for us. Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, he was able to raise the thoroughly dead flesh of Lazarus. Those who believe in him, even though they die, will live and never die. Christ is also able and willing to raise our dead flesh, for we, too, are his friends ([John 15:15](#)).