

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
**March 9, 2008**  
**(Rom 8:8-11, Ezek 37:12-14, Jn 11:1-45)**

**Theme: Draw your family close to God and make Christ your friend.**

Today we enter the Fifth Sunday of Lent. The first reading of today through the prophet Ezekiel, reminds us of God's readiness and willingness to draw us out of our various graves so as to witness his goodness as children of God. God further promised to put his Spirit within us to enable us to live and claim our inheritance as children of God.

In our second reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, St. Paul encourages us to live by the Spirit, for the spirit of God dwells in us. He warns us against basing our lives on things of the flesh, for such a life of the flesh can never allow you and me to please God .

The gospel today presents to us the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus Christ. Here we see the faith-filled family of Lazarus, Mary and Martha; a family that made Jesus their personal friend. When Lazarus was seriously ill, a message came to Jesus that his friend, Lazarus, is dying. Four days after Lazarus' death, Jesus went to Bethany with his apostles and raised Lazarus from the dead.

Now is the appointed time for you and me to make Christ our family friend and our personal friend. Just like the family of Mary, Lazarus and Martha, if we make Christ our personal friend and welcome him in our families, anything that concerns us and our families will certainly touch the loving heart of Jesus. Christ will be ready and willing to come to our aid and assistance any time we are in trouble.

Jesus will always be there for you, to open your grave of pain, loneliness, depression, hardships, sickness, abandonment and sin, and call you out to the fullness of peace, life and joy. As Christians, our Lord Jesus is calling us to be part of this mission by visiting the sick and the lonely, by spending some of our time with the bereaved and the grieved, by helping the less privileged in our society and by comforting those who are in sorrow. By doing all these we are making Christ our personal friend and we are drawing him closer to our families.