

Reading for Weekday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 28th 2026

First reading

Ezekiel 37:21-28

‘I will make them one nation.’

Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there for ever, and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst for evermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst for evermore.

Responsorial Psalm

Jer 31:10. 11-12b. 13. R cf. 10d

The Lord guards us as a shepherd his flock.

Hear the word of the Lord, O nations;
declare it to the distant isles and say,

‘He who scattered Israel will gather him and guard him as a shepherd his flock.’

For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, redeemed him from a hand too strong for him.

They shall come and sing praise on the heights of Sion, come streaming to the bounty of the Lord.

Then the maiden shall rejoice in a dance, the young men and old together.

‘I will change their mourning into joy; I will console them, giving gladness for sorrow.’

Gospel Acclamation

Ezekiel 18:31

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

Cast away from you all your transgressions, says the Lord,
and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

Gospel

John 11:45-56

‘To gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.’

At that time: Many of the Jews, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, ‘What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our Place

and our nation.’ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.’ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the Temple, ‘What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?’

Short reflection on the reading for today

In order that all the dispersed children of God can become one family as the prophet Ezekiel announced, they are not asked to lose anything .. but to freely give all away. Many centuries later, Paul told his gentile converts to “preserve all that is true, admirable, decent, virtuous or worthy of praise.” (Phil 4:8). God-given talents and qualities, however, must be shared and thereby further enriched in a covenant of peace, the people’s covenant among themselves and with their God.

To share the best that we have is where it pinches. No one of us sweats much over sharing our superfluous items. In fact we are anxious to clean house, give them away or sell them online, and forget about them. But the Bible does not want us simply to get rid of things; it calls us to share as one family. Ezekiel, always practical minded about details, adds that we be united in politics (one prince), in worship (one sanctuary), and in our sense of belonging (one land).

Jesus interacted with politics, religion and social customs. He cured the sick and the handicapped and broke religious taboos; he threatened political structures, where even the high priest was the appointee of the Romans; he ate and drank with non-observant people. He showed us how to share the best even with those considered the most lowly.

To fulfil his mission in this world, Jesus seemed to lose everything, even life itself. He was killed by the most shameful, excruciating form of execution! Yet, because he lost his life in an act of sharing his best with others, that life was raised up to new glory by God, the all-just, all merciful Father. He who scattered Israel, now gathers them together; He guards them as a shepherd his flock. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will console and gladden them after their sorrow.