

# Fifth Sunday of Lent: The Resurrection of Lazarus and a Call to Care for Life

*By Cheryl Dugan, Director for Asia Pacific and Member Leadership*

On this Fifth Sunday of Lent, we stand before the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:1–45). The air is heavy with grief. Martha’s words are painfully honest: *“Lord, if you had been here…”* And Jesus did not rush to fix the situation. He weeps. Before the miracle, there is compassion. Before the command, there is a heart moved by love.

Lent has been inviting us to “return to the heart.” In this Gospel, we encounter the heart of Christ, not distant from suffering but open and vulnerable. He allows himself to feel the sorrow of a grieving family. He stands before the reality of death and does not look away.

In *Dilexit Nos*, we pray: *“May he pour out the treasures of his light and love, so that our world... may regain the most important and necessary thing of all: its heart”* (DN 31).

## **Responding to the cry of the earth with an attentive heart**

Responding to the cry of the earth —this week [Laudato Si' Goal](#)— begins here: with a heart that refuses indifference. It is the same heart that Christ shows us at the tomb of Lazarus: present with sorrow, moved to love before acting. We too are invited to respond with the same compassion and attentiveness.

Today, this call becomes real in many places around the world.

In **Dupax del Norte in the Philippines**, farmers and Indigenous communities face deep uncertainty. Their lives are intertwined with the rivers, forests, and soil of their land. When a foreign-linked company received permission to explore **3,100 hectares for minerals**, many residents felt their voices had not been fully heard.

Out of concern for their land and their future, community members formed a **human barricade**—a plea to be seen, heard, and protected.

The situation escalated when a court ordered the protesters dispersed. Civil rights groups later reported **violent arrests and excessive use of force**, including the deployment of heavily armed police and a SWAT team.

In moments like this, the Gospel raises a profound question:

Who is truly listening?

Who will stand in solidarity with vulnerable communities and with the earth itself?

### **Restoring life wherever it is constrained**

Standing before Lazarus' tomb, Jesus does not deny the reality of death. He names it and weeps over it. But he also calls beyond it: *"Lazarus, come out!"*

This is not only a miracle story. It is a revelation of who God is and who we are called to become. The heart of Christ does not accept death as the final word. Love moves toward restoration. Life is called forth, even when it seems bound and buried.

Yet when Lazarus emerges, he is still wrapped in burial cloth. Jesus turns to the community: *"Unbind him, and let him go."*

Resurrection requires participation. It requires hands willing to untie what suffocates life. Responding to the cry of the earth, then, is not simply about opposing what harms creation. It is about unbinding life wherever it is constrained: restoring trust, strengthening dialogue, and accompanying communities in discernment. It is about refusing cynicism and choosing care.

### **The God who weeps is the God who restores our common home**

Returning to the heart means asking ourselves difficult questions. Where have I grown numb to ecological loss? Where have I accepted division and injustice as inevitable? Where have I sealed the stone because it seemed safer not to hope?

Christ still stands before the tombs of our time: degraded ecosystems, silenced communities, fractured relationships. He still weeps. But He also still calls.

Perhaps this Lent, the invitation is not first to solve everything, but to listen more deeply. To let compassion disturb our comfort. To allow Christ to pour into our wounded world “the treasures of his light and love,” so that we, too, may regain our heart.

As we draw closer to Holy Week, we remember: the God who weeps is the God who restores. The God who calls Lazarus forth will Himself step out of the tomb. Death will not have the last word.

**Reflection Question:**

*Where do I sense signs of death in creation — and where am I being invited to care for life?*