

## Homily 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent 2026

‘I am The Resurrection and The Life.’

I not only believe in people rising from the dead I know it to be true. My grandparents, on my mum’s side, were poor but saintly people from the Mayo countryside in the rugged west coast of Ireland. Gran died in January 1973 and Granda in August 1974. At dinner table the night he died Granda casually announced, ‘Mammy visited me during the night. She was young, dressed in the whitest of white dresses and beckoned me to come to her. Mum responded, ‘Oh daddy, it was only a dream.’ However, Granda insisted calmly, ‘No Mary, Mammy was there, it was no dream. After she passed by the bottom of my bed many of my “dead” relatives also passed by similarly dressed, carrying torches and singing the most beautiful hymn of praise.’ When I returned home from visiting some friends there was an ambulance outside my Granda’s house, blue light flashing, Paramedics were trying to resuscitate, but Granda had gone to join Gran in heaven.

The Prophet Ezekiel today makes the resurrection from the dead a key aspect of our Judeo - Christian faith, Ezekiel proclaims, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves,, And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.’ Amongst many in Israel, including The Pharisees, belief in a bodily resurrection was common.

St Paul in his Letter to The Romans states, ‘If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.’ Thus, from the time of The Early Church, Christians unequivocally, preached a bodily resurrection. This belief is in The Nicene Creed which we say when we celebrate Mass, ‘.....and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, Amen.’

St John in today’s Gospel describes Jesus proclaim, ‘I am The Resurrection and the Life.’ “I am” statements remind us what God told Moses to say if the people asked God’s name, “Tell them, ‘I am who I am.’” Jesus is claiming equality with God, Jesus IS God. John then tells how Jesus raises his dear friend Lazarus, after days in the tomb, to life to prove that which he proclaims to be is true. This is not the only ‘raising’ from the dead recounted in The Gospels: Jesus also raises Jairus’ daughter (Mk 5:21-24) and the widow of Nain’s son (Lk 7:11-17).

As we approach Holy Week and relive the humiliation, pain and suffering of Christ during his Passion and Death let’s have ‘one eye’ on the glory of Resurrection by which Jesus became the ‘first of MANY to rise from the dead.’ (1 Cor 15:20) (Col 1:18). Granda also told me so!