

Homily on fifth Sunday of Lent-2020

(Ezekiel 37.12-14; Romans 8.8.11; John 11.1-45)

Resurrection and new life is the focal point of fifth Sunday in Lent. Prophet Ezekiel assures God's people living in Babylonian captivity that Yahweh, God, one day will bring them back to live in the freedom of the Promised Land. He assures God's people that do not even death will stop Him from carrying out this promise. Yahweh says, *"I will open your graves, have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel."*

St. Paul, in the second reading, assures the early Roman Christians, who were facing death by persecution, and us, who are surrounded by a culture of death, that the same Spirit Who raised Jesus from the dead and who dwells within us will raise our mortal bodies to Life on the Last Day. Here St. Paul reassures about the resurrection of Jesus, the ground of our Faith and the basis for our hope of sharing in Jesus' Resurrection.

In the gospel we heard the great miracle story of raising of Lazarus. Raising Lazarus is also Jesus' last public appearance before His Passion and death. In addition, it is the last and greatest of the miracles performed by our Lord to demonstrate that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, and that all those who believe in Him will receive eternal life. It's the prefiguration of Jesus' victory over death at the cost of his own human life, and a sign anticipating his Resurrection.

In the dramatic story of Lazarus, there are three great truths revealed that are helpful to us to reflect. The first truth is that Jesus wept with those he loved and He still does. That is so important for us to know! Our Lord is not only the healer of pain, but our Lord also feels with us.

When we hurt, Jesus hurts. When we are sad, Jesus is sad. When we grieve he grieves. When we cry, He cries with us. We may feel like we suffer by ourselves, but we never suffer alone. When we suffer, Jesus suffers with us. The gospel says, “Jesus wept!” (John 11.35) that is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it is also one of the most powerful verses in the entire Bible. Jesus shed a lot of tears at Lazarus’ tomb. Someone humorously said, “Christ cried so loudly, He woke Lazarus up.”

The second truth is that Jesus raised people up and he still does. Jesus never officiated over a funeral. He never gave a funeral homily. Jesus did not do funerals-He only did resurrections. We see in our Lord raising people always: mentally, emotionally and physically, spiritually. He is calling us. It is time for us to get up from our own tombs. Our Lord wants to set us free. First and foremost, our Lord wants to set us free from our sins, from our bondage, our guilt, our grief, from our fear, our hatred, as well as from our addictions. Jesus wants us to have a new beginning, a new life, a new hope, and believe, our Lord has the power and authority to do it.

Lastly, Jesus included others in the healing process and he still does. What happens when Lazarus comes out of the tomb? Jesus turned to his family and friends and says, “Unbind him, let him go.” (John 1.44) Sounds strange! Most of us don’t even stop to think about this. Jesus performed the biggest miracle, raising Lazarus from death, but He relied on others to take part in it. Certainly Jesus could have taken the tomb clothes off Lazarus and set him free, but He did not. He included others in the performance of His miracles and He still does. God is always counting on you to help Him do His work in the world.

In this crucial time of Covid-19 pandemic, as we are all dealing and struggling with it, let us thank all the doctors, nurses, professional caregivers, those taking care of the isolated, the love and care of our church leadership, and all our civic and political leaders for their prompt actions and guidance, those working behind the scenes to provide us with essential commodities, and to you my brothers and sisters in Christ for staying in home and praying unceasingly. We are united with our Lord in prayer to save the world and to give life to everyone.

Like Martha and Mary, let us invite our Lord, into our families, and listen to him, saying, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you would see the Glory of God.” (John 11. 40) There is nothing beyond the power of God, but he is inviting us to cooperate with His grace to protect life.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters in Christ, this Sunday readings reassure our faith in Jesus Christ, who is ‘the Resurrection and the Life’.

May God Bless and protect you all.



Saturday, March 28

5:00 Agostinho Paixao by the family
 Antonina Rossi by John Rossi

Sunday, March 29 (Fifth Sunday of Lent)

8:30 Fernande Tait by Ann & Richard
 Mass in thanksgiving by Joey Guevarra
 11:00 Parishioners

Monday, March 30

9:00 Guy Ouellet by Diane & Régis
 7:30 Alessandro Vinci by Joan & Louis Longo
 Eileen Malone by the family

Tuesday, March 31

9:00 Fernande Tait by the Wilson family

Wednesday, April 1

9:00 Andrew Wilson by Dot Haines
 5:00 Habeeb Hindo & Sameer Michael by the Al Simaani family

Thursday, April 2

9:00 Fernande Tait by Deirdre Rochefort

Friday, April 3

9:00 Souls in Purgatory by Connie & Sergio Giaccari
 5:00 Vocations by the Knights of Columbus

Saturday, April 4

12:00 For the sick

5:00 Alessandro Vinci

by the family

ALL MASSES WILL BE CELEBRATED IN PRIVATE

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

*May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed
through the mercy of God rest in peace.*

Holy Father's Prayer Intention for March

Evangelization: *Catholics in China* – We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

Passion Sunday celebrations:

Since all the churches are closed due to covid-19 pandemic we will not be celebrating Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday this year. But I encourage you to follow the Sunday missal passion readings and watch the live Mass on the TV.

United in Prayer

Fr. Joy Abraham