

St. Louis Catholic Church

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14

John 11:1-45

"Lazarus, Come Out!" Dramatic words and divine power expressed by Jesus. His dear friend had been dead for four days. He came out bound in burial cloths and was untied and free to go back to the life he had known. There is a great story about the divinity of Jesus that relates to this Gospel. As the story goes a man who is very intellectual and highly educated is traveling in Europe on a train. He is very smug and sure of himself. He is an avowed atheist. Religion to him is a crutch for the lower classes. He notices a young girl across the aisle who is studying a Catechism for her Catholic Religion. In asking about her studies, he reveals his philosophy on life. He even says that man has created religion to control minds and lives. It is a sort of trickery to keep people in line. He says stories in the Bible are to dazzle people with a hope to cause fear and yet to give hope to the hopeless.

He then says an example of this is the story of Lazarus. He explains to the girl that it was a gimmick to make people believe. He argues that Jesus and Lazarus were in cahoots. Jesus was to use the fish hook by saying "Lazarus come out" and then Lazarus would take his cue and walk out to the awe of the crowd. The little girl simply said, "I don't agree. If Jesus had just said "come out" then everyone who was dead would have come back to life. That impressed the intellectual and reminds us of the childlike trust in Christ that we sometimes abandon. St. Paul once wrote that without the Resurrection then all else is rubbish.

Lazarus would live again but only the old life that he had. He really wasn't resurrected but was resuscitated to his human life. That is temporary. The Resurrection is the theology and belief that we permanently will be raised to life. We will receive a "new body" patterned after the Glorified Body of Jesus. Remember Jesus was not easily recognized when He appeared. Something was different. He had a Glorified Body that can't cry, despair, hunger, thirst, be lonely, suffer or die. Our body is called a tent that is a temporary dwelling. It can decay, be invaded, destroyed, hurt and it will die. We have the promise that when we are born, baptized, live, suffer, follow and die in and with Christ we too will be raised. Hope is a virtue and it will not disappoint.

Jesus told Martha and Mary in their grief that "I am the Resurrection and the Life, He who believes in Me though he dies will rise. And he who believes in Me will never die". Yes, not only will he be raised but in truth we will never die. We will change. We will put on a new form. We will be clothed in the immortal and not the mortal, the incorruptible and not the corruptible. Our human nature has been graced and redeemed. Set your thoughts on things above in heaven rather than on things below--great counsel from St. Paul.

We can't forget the human side either. Jesus, the Word, took on our flesh in every way but sin. He embraced humanity and experienced vulnerability. He had a heart and loved, He had emotions and cried, He had a body and suffered. He knew hunger, weariness, thirst, depression. In today's Gospel it says "He wept". We need to know this because He understands.

He had given sight to the blind man and so the crowd and Martha and Mary wondered why He wasn't there. "If you would have been here my brother would not have died". Jesus, in a sense,

lost control in a situation He could have controlled. But I believe that was His choice. He becomes overcome with tears. He was noticed and apparently it was more than a few tears running down His cheeks. I believe He was identifying with us when we are the weakest. Times happen in our lives when events cause us to have no control. Sickness, tragedy, heartbreak, injury, rejection, failure and death to loved ones are terrible moments like the death of Lazarus. Calling Lazarus back to life is a cue that those bad moments of ours can also be beneficial. We can be made wiser and stronger. They prepare us for future storms when we can look back and know that we have a Savior, brother and friend who sympathizes and will help us through our tears. It can help us become more aware of our weakness and the fragility of life and therefore rely on the presence of God in our lives.

Again "Be not afraid. It is I", are some powerful words. Sin is the only thing that kills His abiding presence. That is all we should fear. Seek His mercy and let Him walk with us as a Good Shepherd. To the things that have us bound and tied up, let Him call us to life. He wants to free us and give us a new life now especially if we are entombed by sin, anger, selfishness, greed, envy, jealousy, bitterness, addiction, alienation from family, church and society. Let's open ourselves to His call in this Lenten Season. Let's come to life, like in Ezekiel, from our graves and receive a new spirit.

Let Christ call each of us (your name) come out. Let Jesus say be loosed, unbound and untied. Live Resurrection now. Become a new creation through the power of the Word and the Sacraments (especially Peace).

God Bless,
Msgr. John McArthur

Key Events This Week:

1. Bishop's Appeal--Goal 100% Participation--Now 35%
Goal \$439,000--\$335,000
2. [Click here](#) for Service Opportunities
We get 24 Hours Everyday
We ask 24 Hours in a Year to Serve the Lord