

Fifth Sunday of Lent, 2 April 2017
"I am the resurrection and the life"

Reading 1: Ez 37:12-14

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Reading 2: Rom 8:8-11

Gospel: John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

Meditation: If a true "friend loves at all times", why did Jesus delay in coming to Lazarus' home when he knew that his friend was gravely ill? Jesus certainly loved Lazarus and his two sisters and he often stayed in their home at Bethany. But to the surprise of his friends and disciples, Jesus did not go right away to Bethany when he was called. Jesus explained that Lazarus' sickness would bring glory to God.

Courage to act in the light of God's truth

In God's economy we each have our "day" whether it be short or long. While time is limited, there is enough for us to accomplish what God intends. God gives each of us our allotted portion in life. We can either waste it or use it to the utmost for God's glory. Jesus did not let circumstances or pressure dictate what he would do. Nor did he permit others to dictate his actions or timetable. He took action of his own initiative and in his good time. Both the Romans and the Jews divided the day into twelve equal hours from sunrise to sunset.

The hope of our resurrection

This is our faith and our hope. *"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you"*. God gives us the power of his Holy Spirit that we may be made alive in Christ. Even now we can experience the power of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus in our personal lives. The Holy Spirit is ever ready to change and transform us into men and women of faith, hope, and love. Let the Holy Spirit strengthen within you the life and joy of God and the hope of heaven.

God is my help

The name Lazarus means "God is my help". Jesus' parable about the poor man Lazarus, who died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, ends with a warning: *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead."* Through Lazarus' sickness and subsequent death, God brought glory through his Son the Lord Jesus, who raised his friend from the dead in anticipation of his own death and resurrection. Our participation in the Lord's Supper in the Eucharist already gives us a foretaste of Jesus' transfiguration of our bodies. Psalm 27 ends with the great prayer of hope in the resurrection:

"I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord!" Do you find joy and hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

- 1) "I am the resurrection and the life" says Jesus. What is your understanding of this statement?
- 2) How does Jesus make a difference in how you live your life?