

Life, Death and Eternal Salvation
5th Week of Lent – April 2, 2017 – John 11:1-45

The Christian journey can be encapsulated into the readings of these last three weeks with a specific look at life, death and eternal salvation. The woman at the well showed us our own sense of isolation from God and the community with Jesus proclaiming that he is the living water of life. We receive this life-giving water at our baptism, which remove Original Sin and gives us a place in the Christian community.

The story of the man born blind takes a look into the darkness of sin, the death of our relationships. This story calls all of us to seek the light of Christ which dispels all evil. Jesus is the way from darkness to light, captured in our sacramental celebration of reconciliation and on-going conversion.

Today, we are one step closer to Holy Week when we will liturgically celebrate the triumph of Jesus riding into Jerusalem, the Lord's Last Supper, his passion, death and resurrection. This is no ordinary reenactment. This is the holiest week of the entire year. It is the very essence of what we believe about God, that God loved us so much that God would surrender to human suffering and death. Jesus gives us a miracle this week in the story of the raising of Lazarus. This is a view into the truth about Eternal Life. It is our belief as Christians that human death is not the end, not the final answer.

We hear of a man named Lazarus who is ill. "So the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." Instead of leaving immediately, Jesus waits. If Jesus could have gone right away to save him from death then why did he not go? Jesus says, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

This miracle is a look into the truth of our own eternal life. Lazarus is in the tomb when Jesus arrives. Those that know this are already conscious of the decay of death and the reality that presents. "Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, 'Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days.'"

Here is the pivotal question. Do I believe that God has the ultimate power over death? There were those in this particular story who did not believe. There are those who do not believe today. Am I a believer? Jesus first calls upon God, the source of life.. Then "he cried out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out. The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.'"

We never hear what happens to Lazarus. The story is left to our imagination. The story is not about what Lazarus looked like or what he did after this event. Rather, the truth is that he was called from death to life in Christ. It is a story in which we are called from disbelief to belief. Jesus wants us to believe that on the day we enter the grave, we too will hear the His voice calling us to come out into the glory of God's eternal life.

Happy Lent!


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