

LENT V SUNDAY (APRIL 10,2011): Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

In today's gospel, the raising of Lazarus is one of the final and greatest sign of Jesus and is a sign anticipating his own resurrection. The motives behind the miracle: to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, and that through faith in him believers will receive eternal life. In other words, Jesus wanted to make this, his last recorded miracle, a convincing proof of his claim to be what he was---the Messiah, sent by God to give new life, eternal life, to mankind. Jesus explains the why of this miracle as *"It is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."* First, when Jesus brings Lazarus back to life, people will give God glory for the miracle. Second, in this Gospel, Jesus' glorification involves the cross, and verses 45-53 make it clear that Lazarus' resurrection will lead to Jesus' death and resurrection. This is another way of saying that His death on the cross will lead to his glorification. This miracle story, taking place as Jesus is on his final journey to Jerusalem, prepares us for his death and resurrection.

The moving story of sorrow and faith: John's Gospel begins with a wedding and closes with a funeral. There are four primary characters in this story: Jesus, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Martha, Mary and Lazarus were good friends of Jesus. John tells us that he "loved" them. Lazarus' sisters had sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus was ill and perhaps would soon die. On receiving the message, Jesus waited two days so that the will of God might be demonstrated and God glorified by His Son through a major miracle. At last, Jesus went to the house of Lazarus, knowing very well that his friend had died. On his arrival, Jesus pacified Martha with one of the most treasured of his teachings which brings great consolation at funeral service, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die."* Jesus offers "eternal life," which begins with faith now and lasts forever in its fullness. Then he asked one of the most important questions found in the Bible, *"Do you believe this, Martha?"* Martha answered, *"I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."* Martha pronounced her confession of faith as a response to Jesus who had revealed himself as the resurrection and the life.

We live in a world that is filled with death. We kill each other in acts of murder, abortion, euthanasia, execution, war and terrorist activities. We kill ourselves through suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, overwork, stress, bad eating habits, and physical neglect. We watch calmly as others die from poverty, hunger and malnutrition, homelessness, unemployment, poor education, disease, child abuse, arms proliferation, discrimination, pollution, and destruction of the environment. The most important question is: am I ready to face my death? A strange question and its truthful answer are found in the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. "What is the greatest wonder in the world?" The answer is: "All of us know that we will surely die, but each of us foolishly thinks that he or she will not die any time in the near future." Let us not be

foolish; let us be wise, well-prepared and ever ready to meet our Lord with a clear conscience when the time comes.

(Taken from the Scriptural Homilies)

