

## **Reflection on the Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)**

**First Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14**

**Psalms 130:1-8**

**Second Reading: Romans 8:8-11**

**Gospel: John 11:1-45**

It is so great to walk out of my house and see that spring is here – dead looking trees are now budding, brown grass is now turning vibrant green, and empty flower beds are now full of tulips, daffodils and hyacinths (love that smell). Life abounds! Hope abounds! When I walk from the house to the church, I walk across a blacktop parking lot. Every now and then I see a little green sprout pushing out of the blacktop. I think to myself, “Can’t stomp out life”. Here this little sprout has thousands of acres to grow in Quarryville, yet it grows out of blacktop. Can’t stomp out God! That should give us great hope!

Our First Reading and the Gospel talk about graves and tombs. What a contrast to the springtime happening outside right now. Then again, how appropriate today’s readings are for the time we are going through right now! I thought things were getting better! I was wrong (again). The governor announced on Friday that Lancaster County is now included in the “Stay at Home” policy. To make matters worse, Holy Week and Easter have been cancelled to the public. None of us ever experienced not having the choice to go to Mass, especially on Easter. Unheard of! Awkward! Again, I thought things were getting better. In other words, we are stuck in the tomb with Lazarus for at least two more weeks or probably more. It just seems like bad timing for all of this. Doesn’t it?

When Jesus was told that Lazarus died, he waited two days to go see him. Seems a bit awkward, doesn’t it? Why wait? In the Jewish tradition, a person was not declared truly dead until the fourth day. The three days after someone died was known as an intermediate state. The person was not considered “completely” dead until the fourth day. So, when Jesus came back to raise Lazarus on the fourth day, he was truly

dead in their eyes. No one could say, well he didn't really raise Lazarus from the dead because he wasn't truly dead! So of course, **Jesus' timing was perfect**. The miracle was truly amazing that Lazarus was raised from the dead. Jesus then used it as a teaching moment to increase the faith of all those who witnessed this amazing miracle.

There is so much we can pull from this Gospel passage. The main point I would like to stress to you and myself is short and sweet. "It's all in God's time." God knows what he is doing, and we have to trust in him, especially when things seem to go upside-down and all around. We all have experienced life-changing moments in our lives, and with God, faith, family and friends we get through them. We will get through this crisis too.

So, Springtime is here. We had to wait through winter and endure the cold, rainy, damp weather. We had to wait. "It's all in God's time." Now, spring is here and we are kind of awkwardly stuck in the tomb; waiting to be released so we can return to a normal life again. I don't have an answer why this is happening to us. What I do know is that "it's all in God's time" **AND** it will be better in the future!

So, when we hear the delays, the "stay at home" notices, and the cancelations, I'm going to say, "It's all in God's time!" I hope you will join me in this little prayer of hope.

Also, let us continue to pray for those infected with this virus and all those who are affected indirectly – especially our healthcare workers, cleaners, and all those who are considered "necessary" workers. May God protect you and bless you as you serve us. Amen.

God bless,  
Fr. Mark Speitel