

2020 March 29

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Readings:

First: Ezekiel 37.12-14, "I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live." (14a)

Psalm: 130, "With the Lord there is steadfast love." (7a)

Second: Romans 8.8-11, "The Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you." (11a)

Gospel: John 11.1-45, "I am the resurrection and the life." (25a)

I am Resurrection

There are three instances in the gospels which narrate Jesus resuscitating dead persons, the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:14-15), the synagogue leader's daughter (Matthew 9:25) and Lazarus (John chapter 11). Then we have the Resurrection of Jesus. In the first three instances what Jesus did was resuscitating the three in their own physical bodies. All of them died again, hoping to resurrect on the second coming of Jesus.

These were not the type of the resurrection Jesus had on Easter Sunday and what he speaks when referring to our resurrection. On the day of his resurrection the body Jesus assumed and the bodies we shall assume on our resurrection are different from what we have now in our physical existence on earth. Our bodies after resurrection will no longer be perishable as it happened to the above three resuscitations. The new bodies we will assume will surpass the limitations of time and space, pain and suffering, etc.

The relationships we enter into in the resurrected life also will be different as Jesus clarifies to the Sadducees. While discussing the resurrection of the dead Jesus said, *"In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven"*. Then Jesus quotes from the Old Testament *"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. He is God not of the dead, but of the living"* (Matthew 22: 30, 32). Jesus is telling that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are living! It signifies that after our physical death, we live in God's presence.

Regaining of life after death is what we celebrate in our funeral liturgies and in our prayers for the dead. Jesus also hints at the changes in the nature of our relationships with each other in heaven. On earth the basis of our relationship the family consisting of parents and children, husband and wife, siblings, in-laws, friends' circle, etc. In heaven this structure is likely to be gone, *"but are like angels in heaven"* (Matthew 22:30). All these mysteries we may not understand now with our limited intellectual power. The most beautiful and reassuring thing that happened in the whole incident of Lazarus' resurrection is the declaration of Jesus, *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (John 11:25). Let us trust in this declaration and his promise, and cling to this Lord of the resurrection.

Fr. George

Pope Francis has called upon all Catholics and all Christians over the world to join together to implore God to rid the world of the Coronavirus pandemic. **“In these days of trial, as humanity trembles at the threat of Coronavirus pandemic, I would propose that all Christians join together to raise their voice to heaven.”**

Pope Francis also invites all Christians to set apart **Friday, March 27th a DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER** to intercede for God’s mercy to save the world from Coronavirus. On that day the Pope will be leading an hour long **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION in Rome beginning at 2.00 p.m. island time,** < revised (6.00 p.m. Vatican time).

Fr. George

26th March 2020.