

Dear Parish Family,

Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” These were the words spoken by our Blessed Lord to St. Martha in the Gospel for this Sunday, the 5th Sunday of Lent.

Martha and Mary were sisters and they had a brother named Lazarus. Lazarus was ill, so they sent word to Jesus. “Master, the one you love is ill.” For her part, Mary had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair. Still, Lazarus would die before Jesus arrived. Nevertheless, Jesus told his disciples that “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.”

When Jesus approached the tomb he said, “Take away the stone.” Before giving the command for Lazarus to come out of the tomb, Jesus offered a prayer of thanks to God the Father. He then “cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’” Lazarus came out, “tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.” “Jesus said to them, ‘Untie him and let him go.’” Many began to believe in him.

“I am the resurrection and the life,” says the Lord. At a time when our world is filled with fear and anxiety, these words reassure us that no virus or crisis is bigger or more powerful than Jesus Christ. At a time when 24-hour news channels display statistics of victims around the clock, our Lord says that death does not have the final word. At a time when we are called to practice “social distancing,” Jesus shows us that He is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

My dear friends in Christ, this is a Lent unlike any other in our lifetime. Our world has been shaken by an unseen foe that has left countless millions in isolation, many seriously ill and, sadly, many dead. Still, those words spoken to Martha are spoken to us today and every day of our lives. “I am the resurrection and the life...everyone who believes in me will never die.”

Jesus wants to remove the stones from our hearts. They may be stones of fear or resentment. They may be stones of discouragement or even despair. They may be stones of disordered desires that always leave us miserable. Whatever the stones may be, Jesus wants to take them away. Take them away so that his light and grace can shine brightly into our souls. When that happens, we, like Lazarus, are untied and freed – freed to love fully, freed to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Please be assured of my ongoing prayers for you and your loved ones during this challenging time for our Church and our world.

God bless you.

Fr. Dan Redmond