

April 02, 2017

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Jesus conquered death!

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalms 130:1-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

In the first reading the prophet Ezekiel is instructed by the Lord to prophesy to the people of Israel. Their graves will be opened, they will rise from them and return to Israel. The Lord God will put the spirit of life into them and they will know the Lord is truly God of all. As the Lord promises, the Lord does.

The prayer of the Psalmist cries out from despair and anguish and places his trust in the Lord. He reveres the Lord who forgives and will patiently wait, wait, wait, for answers. He acknowledges that the Lord is kind, redemptive, and will redeem us from all of our inequities.

In the second reading Paul reminds his listeners that they are of the spirit because the Spirit of God dwells in them. The body dies because of sin, but the Spirit lives because of justice. The Father who raised Jesus from the dead will raise the believers also and if you belong to Christ you have his Spirit which the Father recognizes.

In the Gospel Jesus is summoned by Martha and Mary to come and heal Lazarus who lies at home very ill. By the time Jesus arrives Lazarus is dead in the tomb for four days. With reticence the stone is removed from the tomb's entrance and then Jesus calls to Lazarus to come out. Jesus' simple prayer is, "Father, I thank you for hearing me." Still wrapped in linen Lazarus leaves the darkness of the tomb and enters into the light of the sun and it is made clear that through Jesus there is resurrection and life for the believer.



The Father raised the Son,
The Son raises the believers.

The Holy Spirit raises Life within us.

The words of the prophet Ezekiel read from the New Testament perspective foreshadow the concept of eternal life. However, the prophet was not speaking of life after death but rather of life after the exile period in Babylon. The exiles have lost all hope in the future and Ezekiel has a vision in which God will lead the Israelites from despair to a new life. The Psalmist message is TRUST in the Lord and we need to mirror his patient waiting. Jesus tells his disciple that he will wake Lazarus from sleep. At first they did not understand that Jesus was talking of death but they interpreted him to mean ordinary sleep. How often do we misinterpret what we hear?

So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.
(Matthew 24:44)

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. (Romans 6:8)

Man born of woman is short-lived and full of trouble, like a flower that springs up and fades, swift as a shadow that does not abide. (Job 14:2)

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come (Hebrews 13:14)

Let us, therefore, receive God, the Lord, the true healer, who alone can come to heal our souls since he has borne so much on our behalf. For he is always knocking at the doors of our hearts in order that we may open up to him and that he may enter in and take his rest into our souls, and that he may take up his abode with us. (Pseudo-Macarius, 390)

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