

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – Lazarus

Past Sunday's gospel had the dramatic event of the healing of the man born blind. It showed that Jesus is the light of the world.

Today's gospel shows an even more dramatic event.

The raising of Lazarus is the last and the greatest of the seven signs in John's gospel that show us who Jesus is.

The raising of Lazarus tells us three things:

1. Jesus Christ is our brother and best friend.

"Lord the one you love is sick."

Mary and Martha knew that when they sent this simple message, that a specific request was unnecessary. Jesus would know what to do.

His mother acted in the same way at the wedding feast of Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle.

Mary simply told her son: "They have no wine."

The two sisters did not even name their brother.

"The one you love" was all the identification Jesus needed.

Here, the writer, St. John, wanted us to understand that Lazarus represented all those whom Jesus loves – ourselves included.

Jesus, the God man, is completely human and completely divine.

What could be more human than Jesus' tears at the grave of His dear friend Lazarus.

"See how much He loved him" the bystanders said.

It was their response to the shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept."

When we think that no one else understands what we are going through, we need to recall that there is one who always understands.

He is our brother and our best friend – Jesus Christ.

2. This story also tells that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God.

Last Sunday we saw Him as the giver of life.

We have life already. So how can Jesus be the giver of life?

The life we have we received from our parents.

Every day that life is growing shorter with every tick of the clock.

Jesus Christ is the giver of a new and higher life – one that is not passing away.

He tells us this in today's gospel:

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die."

To believe in Jesus Christ means to Trust Him.

For those who do trust him, physical death will be the door to a new and higher life, “a place where there is no more suffering, no more sickness (or virus), no more death, where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes” (Rev 7:17, 21:4)

There was a big difference between the raising of Lazarus and the raising of Jesus. Jesus was raised to a new life.

Lazarus was brought back to the old life.

Lazarus was still wearing his burial clothes.

Jesus left the grave clothes behind in the empty tomb and passed beyond death to a new and higher life.

Jesus our brother and friend, is the eternal Son of God and the giver of eternal life.

And finally, the story shows that Jesus Christ gives eternal life to believers here and now.

We, who in baptism were made sisters and brothers of Jesus, live on the physical level but also on the spiritual level.

This new relationship with our heavenly father, we get at our baptism, is called “eternal life.”

This eternal life begins here and now – not at some future date.

It is nourished in many ways – especially through the sacraments.

It is called “Grace.”

Grace is sharing in the life of Jesus our brother and our best friend.

It is sharing in the life of one who loves us more than we can ever imagine.

Jesus raises us from the spiritual death of sin as often as we ask Him.

Spiritual renewal is not a once and for all affair but an ongoing process.

While, in time, we will always need God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus is our brother and best friend.

He is the divine Son of God, giver of life.

And He gives us the gift of eternal life here and now.

That is the Gospel of the Lord.

That is His good news.

Amen