



DARE TO DREAM

Lent Week Five - Dying and Rising
Week beginning 21st of March

Week Five: Dying and Rising - Embracing New Life

There are many, including Christians, who struggle to believe in the resurrection and yet it lies at the heart of our faith. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead as a powerful sign of the new life offered to us in faith. Jesus, himself, rose from the dead and we too have the experience of rising to life in baptism. The eternal life continues to grow within us. Why is it then that sometimes we choose not life but death? Sometimes it is simply a case of avoiding difficult situations, being unwilling to face the reality in which we find ourselves. When we do this, we can become more dead than alive. Our reflections this week offer us an invitation to emerge from the tomb of all that keeps us imprisoned. If we can do this, who knows what freedom it will bring us. Who knows what amazing life we may encounter as our parishes and our diocese flourish and grow abundantly!

Video: Rising from the dead – the invitation to new life

Watch and listen to the video – Fr. Anthony Paris

Prayerfully read this passage from the Gospel of John 11:1-44

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right."

Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the coming into the world.

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So, the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So, they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go.

- Take some to ponder on the words you have just read.
- Notice if there is anything, a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- Read the passage again and then reflect upon all or some of these questions: if you are doing this as a family or a group, make sure everyone is given the opportunity to speak.

Personal Reflection

- All of us hold 'dead' parts within ourselves, that can prevent us from flourishing. Can you name those parts within yourself? What do you need from God to help you rise up and grow again?
- How does your belief in the resurrection help you when faced with uncertainty about life?

Now thinking about your parish

- What do we need to let go of so that our parishes, deaneries and diocese can flourish as a Church of hope and mission?
- Where are the places of hope and growth?

Action

As you come to the end of this series of reflections name three things which you have learned in this process which will help your contribution to the future conversations and discernment moving forward – remember – Dare to Dream!

Finish with a prayer asking the Lord to fill you with the fruits of the Holy Spirit, so that you can respond with faith, hope and love to the opportunities that lie ahead.

