

The Fifth Sunday of Lent please read the following;

Ezekiel 37:1-4

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

St. John 11:1-45

Prayer of the Day,

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Let us pray, Most Merciful God, as we continue to search our hearts and minds, we trust that you remain with us always. Be present dear Lord as we struggle through these trying times. May we remain faithful to each other as you have remained faithful to us. Keep all of your creation in your tender care and help us to continue to come to the aid of those that are in need. Bless us that we might be a blessing, in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

My dear friends in Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus, Amen.

“Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died”, the same statement made by both Martha and Mary. I may have made this same statement, not of my brother, but my very best friend as he died at the tender age of 25. But the question I have to ask is what the spirit of my statement is? What was the spirit of the statements that Martha and Mary had made? Perhaps an answer is found when we explore what being dead is.

We all know that our physical life will come to an end and being Easter people we know that in the end we will be raised to eternal life, but isn't there more than that? Jesus tells us that he is the resurrection and the life suggesting that not only is there a raising of the dead there is also a new life for us in the here and now. That death is not only physical but also being dead is being disconnected from God and his love. When we hear that Lazarus will not die from his illness we hear that he will remain forever connected to God's grace, mercy, forgiveness and love. This is what Jesus hopes for us to see.

Martha shows her spirit, she trusts that whatever one asks of God they will receive. She knows that in the end death has no victory. Jesus continues the conversation and affirms her belief but suggests that there is more, that he indeed is life, life in the here and now and in your belief

you also have this new life. Martha witnesses this to her sister Mary who confronts Jesus yet she makes no declaration of this new life and continues in her mourning as was the tradition with ritual wailing. This disturbs the Lord. As we reflect what our lives in Christ Jesus are we need to ask ourselves which question is ours. Mind you it is perfectly fine to feel anger in our grief, yet the question is sure and we need to find where our spirit is.

How relevant is that to us this day. We may feel a certain hopelessness as we find ourselves sheltering in place as this horrible virus runs its course. No longer are we to gather together physically in Word and Sacrament at least in the short term, yet we still have life, the life that Christ won for us on the cross. We gather electronically as we are able, we get together over the phone, holding each other up in prayer and spirit. We are not dead and this virus will not kill us for nothing can separate us from the love of God.

That is what we receive through Christ Jesus. Jesus weeps for us today a sign of the love and compassion he has for us. We are told that we have life through him, that we need not be separated from our creator God, but believe in Him who is the savior of the world. Perhaps Jesus' anger is directed at those who do not see, that they only believe in being raised from physical death. He weeps because we fail to see the richness of the life that is before us. That ritual is something that is to be mourned, ignoring the life that greets us day by day, calling us into his peace. That we see his glory in the faces of those who bravely go about the task of searching out life. So as we go about these days of quarantine lets be ever mindful that we have life and we have it abundantly calling on one another in grace and mercy to be with those who are in need. Jesus says I am the resurrection and the life, live to the glory of God. Amen