



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY April 2 & BEYOND

Fear and Darkness Into Joy and Great Light



Sometimes you sense the darkness. When you walk into a room of people and you just know that something painful is holding onto the people there. You see it in the way they are talking, and in the way they are looking at each other. You feel certain that you have turned a corner, and not a good one.

We find this in the story of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. When Jesus hears that Lazarus is ill, he does not immediately go to heal him. This is surprising, because the Bible clearly states that Jesus is friends with them. In Jesus' time on earth, he grew close to many of the people he met, and this included, Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. So, his decision to wait until Lazarus dies (John 11:11), seems harsh at first. Jesus tells the disciples that Lazarus is asleep, but there is a deeper meaning to this sleep.

When Jesus decides to go to Lazarus, the disciples are alarmed. Jesus has been in conflict and confrontation with the Jewish leaders. The disciples, fearing the gathering darkness, felt that Jesus should not go back so soon. "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" (11:8)

But, Jesus is determined to be with his friends, and awaken Lazarus from his 'sleep.' The disciples fear becomes greater when they hear Jesus say that Lazarus has died. They seem ready to go with Jesus, and even die with him. It's easy to imagine the despair they felt as they journeyed to Bethany.

When Jesus arrives in Bethany, Martha confronts him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died,” (11:21) It’s easy to hear the disappointment in her words. “But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Martha is a woman of great faith, even at the loss of her brother. Her faith is rewarded in the words of the Master: “I am the resurrection and the life.”

These words touch me more than almost any others in the Bible. When at last Jesus goes to the tomb of Lazarus and sees the sorrow that surrounds him the gospel says: “Jesus wept,” (11:35). His compassion for his friends causes him to weep, just as we do in the most trying of times. Our faith does not remove our feelings, but give them purpose and meaning. We weep from sorrow and love, knowing that Jesus joins us in our mourning.

Jesus calls Lazarus from the tomb, although they discourage him to do so (11:39). After all, it has been four days, well past the time of recovery, there will be an odor. But, this is a time of faith and surprise, the joyous and the unexpected. “Lazarus, come out!” (11:43) Jesus shouts, and our faith is renewed in the power of God in Jesus Christ. Lazarus emerges from the tomb, still wrapped in burial cloths. “Father, I thank you that you have heard me,” (11:41).

This is a final sign that precedes the resurrection of Jesus. The passage that began in fear and darkness ends in joy and great light. Something wonderful is yet to come.

Father Steven L. Schuneman

Readings for this Sunday – The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-3, 11-14 Psalm 130 Romans 6:16-23 John 11:18-44

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
9:30a Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew (Fireside Room)
10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors’ Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

THURSDAY 6:30p Evening Prayer (St. Mary’s Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary’s Chapel)
9:30a Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)
6:00p Stations of the Cross, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Soup Supper

AA Meetings

6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)

8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

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