

**Homily – Fr. Bradley Neely**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Lent, Cycle A**  
**SPPP; Nezperce: Apr 10, 2011**  
**Ez 37: 12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11: 1-45**

We hear in the Lenten Gospel this week, Lazarus, a friend of Christ, becomes ill and dies, and Jesus brings him back to life. But at the outset, when Jesus learned that Lazarus is ill, He stayed where He was for *two more days*, before starting His journey to Lazarus. Doesn't that strike us as odd? *We'll come back to that.*

Many people expressed their concern about Lazarus.

Jesus, in reply, made these profound statements:

1)- *“This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”*

2)- *“Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to **awaken him.**”*

3)- *“Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe.”*

4)- [And to Martha], *“Your brother will rise.”*

*“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”*

5)- [And at the tomb], *“Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe [Father] that you sent me.”*

6)- *“Lazarus, come out!”*

*“Untie him and let him go.”*

In these responses, Jesus seems calm and serene. What His reactions must have seemed like to all of those around Him.

Last week, I recapped what the progression of Lenten Gospels have indicated to us about Jesus:

\*The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, the Temptation Desert,

tells us Jesus is human.

\*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent, the Transfiguration,

we understand that Jesus is divine

\*On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent, with the Women at Well,

Jesus reveals that he has come for the nations.

\*With the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, the Blind Man Cured,

Jesus looks beyond physical healing, and is ultimately concerned with the soul and faith.

\*And with this Sunday's Gospel, we understand that **Jesus**, with his heavenly **Father**, and through the **Holy Spirit**, *has power over death.*

*There is life after death.*

Jesus' reactions to the crisis of Lazarus, and the subsequent miracle performed, seem to point to this:

*“so that they may believe.”*

As with all the other miracles, what Jesus brings about is not humanly possible.

And through what is not humanly possible, Jesus hopes that those who witness these things

believe **He is Who He claims to be.**

**Who He claims to be** in today's Gospel is One Who is able to effect *life after death.*

The truths that God has revealed about Jesus,  
and the reason that God became flesh in the Son,  
have been with us  
for the last 2000 years.  
This DOES affect our lives today,  
and to this minute.  
This revealed truth is the foundation  
of our very identity---  
as incredible as that sounds.

Now, I mentioned earlier  
that I would come back  
to the oddity of Jesus waiting two days  
before going to Lazarus,  
once he had learned that Lazarus is ill.  
Lazarus' sister Martha even believed  
that he would not have died  
if Jesus had gotten there in time.

We would certainly expect anyone  
who was summoned to a seriously ill friend  
to go quickly.  
But Jesus waits two days.  
This is a case where we must turn  
to "thinking with the mind of God."  
Again, Jesus even said to his disciples  
before going to Lazarus,  
*"Lazarus has died. I am glad for you  
that I was not there, **that you may believe.**"*

This event is wrapped in a bit of mystery,  
but if we try to enter into the mind of God---  
in this episode,  
there is an opportunity to for Jesus  
to raise Lazarus from the dead---  
that the disciples *may believe.*"  
Not as man sees does God see.  
Not as man thinks does God think.  
But God has been revealed in sufficient  
measure  
that we may believe.

We live within the mystery of God,

yet we do know about God---  
what He has chosen to reveal.  
And we know that our proper response  
to God's revelation  
is sufficient for eternal salvation.

As we near Holy Week,  
the Church has given us, for our  
consideration,  
the Lazarus Gospel excerpt---  
the truth that God enfleshed in Jesus  
has power over death.  
**We are invited to live eternally  
within that divine power.**  
How can this be?---  
We must think, as we are able,  
with the mind of God.