

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
V Sunday of Lent, Cycle A
Ez 37, 12-14; Psalm 130; Rom 8, 8-11; Jn 11, 1-45
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Let Us Live the Definitive Life

We come to one of the most beautiful narratives in Holy Scripture, the death of Lazarus, the friend of Jesus.¹ It was in Bethany where Lazarus lived with his two sisters, Martha and Mary, and where Jesus liked to go to rest among good friends. The death of Lazarus was used by the evangelist John to bring us to a fuller comprehension of life.

The first thing we have to understand is that the illness of a disciple does not end in death because the life that has been communicated to him by the Spirit is definitive. For that reason, we have chosen this title: “*The Definitive Life.*”

For the disciples who accompanied Jesus and for the sisters of Lazarus, it was incomprehensible that Jesus could have let Lazarus die; they had to learn what we understand today: that the mission of Jesus is not to liberate man from physical death, but to give a new sense to it, the sense of the definitive life.

¹ A large number of curious people will go up to Jerusalem during the Passover to see Lazarus and in him, the wonder that Jesus had performed. On the other hand, this event becomes a detonator for the authorities, the high priests and the Pharisees who from this moment on decide to put Jesus to death. (vv 46-54)

The second thing is to understand salvation: for the disciples, to be saved is to live; for Jesus, it is to live the definitive life, that is, the life that overcomes death.²

When Jesus arrives and meets first with Martha and later with Mary, he leads them, just as he does us today, to realize that death is only a physical necessity. Martha asks Him for something for her brother, *“I know that God will grant you whatever you ask of Him.”* She does not have in mind a great miracle like the resurrection; she sees Jesus as a mediator. She does not understand that Jesus and the Father are one and that the works of Jesus are those of the Father. Mary expresses her grief to the extreme. Throwing herself at His feet, she makes everyone cry, including Jesus, *who is moved to the core of His being.*

In the moment of great expectation, Jesus asks them to *“...take away the gravestone.”* This should be interpreted as asking the community to give up the belief that relegates the resurrection to the end of time. He takes Lazarus out of the place of death in order to teach them that that place is not fitting for one who has believed because the believer continues to live. This believer, Lazarus, comes out of the grave on his own feet; he is dead, yet living.

When Jesus asks them to untie his friend, to remove the burial bindings, He intends that believers untie themselves from the fear of death that paralyzes them.

² The four days that he is sick: four indicates sufficient time, the totality of time, that is required for something. In this case, it is the time required to declare the irreversibility of that death. Also, the stone that covered the grave indicates definitive death. Jesus is going to correct the people's understanding.

Jesus wants them to be freed from fear so that they can understand that to die does not mean to cease living. Moreover, whoever gives up life will regain it, just as Jesus will.

We today want to live the definitive life, but how can we do it? Let us try three approaches:

1-Let us move the gravestone.

This is the first step. To give up the idea that death is conclusive or that we can experience the resurrection only on the last day. This implies giving up the fear of mentioning death or the dead.

In a figurative sense, we must dare to remove the bindings from those who are coming out of their deaths. How much does death paralyze you? What gravestone do you have to remove from your inner life or in your family life that will permit you to confirm the definitive life that we have as disciples?

2-Let us allow ourselves to be moved.

The definitive life, the life that overcomes death, is the life of the Spirit; thus it is the life that is capable of discovering not only our corporeal being, but also our psychological and transcendental being.³ This is where Jesus was moved, because his friend and all of us who believe in Him possess the divine life in addition to our human existence.

³ To find that our "I" is now not only a psychosomatic "I," that is to say, corporeal, but also psychopneumatic or spiritual, and therefore, transcendental.

To be moved implies understanding of love and of temporal separations from our loved ones, understanding life on another level, from which we can accompany each other, as Jesus did today with the sisters of Lazarus.

3-Let us live in a different way.

As if we have just come out of the grave. We have the certainty that death does not have the last word because Christ cured us from the evil of death; he has left us free like Lazarus to make a second trip along the road of life, a second trip full of liberty, light, and love in which the fears that had paralyzed us have vanished.

To live like this involves working for life always, liberating whoever is subject to the ties of death. It implies rejoicing in our definitive life from now on.