

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – March 29, 2020 Year A – Live Streamed 4p

*“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.” (John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45)*

I want to begin my reflection with the words from the Song titled **People Need the Lord** by Steve Green.

**People Need the Lord**

Every day they pass me by,  
I can see it in their eyes.  
Empty people filled with care,  
Headed who knows where?  
On they go through private pain,  
Living fear to fear.  
Laughter hides their silent cries,  
Only Jesus hears.

He continues: Jesus is the open door at the end of broken dreams.

And he asks: ***When will we realize people need the Lord?***

**We are called to take Jesus light to a world where wrong seems right.**

**We are now on the Fifth Sunday of Lent. The Gospel we have heard today is from St. John (11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45).** Jesus face the death of someone whom he truly loved, Lazarus. We know that the passing of someone we care and love is always painful. Martha and Mary, Lazarus sisters, were in pain for losing their brother. So, Jesus was also in pain because of Lazarus' death.

How do we face such painful situation like sickness and death of a loved one? How do we cope with this kind of trauma or suffering? ***Do we give up? Or, do we hold on to God?***

In the Gospel, **Jesus was about to perform this miracle of faith and love – calling out to Lazarus to rise from the dead.** Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. **There were some people who doubted Jesus. They doubted** if Jesus could really prevent Lazarus death or he could truly raise someone from the dead.

**FAITH IS THE KEY**

Faith is critical in seeing the glory of God. Jesus reminded Martha, Mary and the crowd that if they believe – they will see the glory of God and deepen their faith in God.

## FAITH CONQUERS OUR FEAR

Our faith in God help us conquers our fear. On Friday, March 27, Pope Francis delivers an extraordinary blessing “To the City and the World” (Urbi et Orbi) to pray for an end to the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. In his meditation, Pope Francis reflects on Jesus’ words to His Disciples – “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

Like many of us, Pope Francis recognized the gravity of the current global situation, as more than half of the world’s population is confined to their homes to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

For his reflection, Pope Francis uses the passage according to the Gospel of Mark (4:35-41). He highlights the experience of the disciple’s reactions to storm as being afraid and Jesus response to the situation.

According to Pope Francis, “the storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules and lays bare all those attempts to anesthetize ourselves.” *Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*

We are all called to renew our faith in God. Reflecting on the current global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Pope continues saying “*we can draw lessons from the many people who – even though fearful – have reacted by giving their lives, including medical personnel, supermarket clerks, cleaners, priests, police officers, and volunteers.*” This, he said, “**is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial.**”

In times of crisis like this, we all need to believe in God. For Pope Francis, **faith begins “when we realize we are in need of salvation” and are not self-sufficient. We all need God. People need the Lord.**

*In the Second Reading (letter of saint Paul to the Romans 8:8-11)*, Paul reminds his community that they strive to live in the spirit (and not in the flesh) because the spirit cleanses the heart and our whole being. The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead must dwell in us.

## WE NEED LIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

- 1) **We need the spirit of Jesus to continue to overcome sin, sickness, darkness, and death.**
- 2) **We need the spirit of God to remain steadfast in faith amidst the pain and suffering of sinfulness, sickness, and death amidst this global Coronavirus pandemic.**
- 3) **As Jesus commanded the people to untie Lazarus and let him go, we need the spirit of Jesus to untie us from sin, sickness, fear, and death. Only in Jesus that we can truly experience freedom from sin, fear, sickness and death**

Just as Pope Francis ended his reflection yesterday on his special blessing Urbi et Orbi, I too, would like to conclude my homily by borrowing Pope Francis's prayer. He entrusted all of us to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea.

From the words of Pope Francis, let us pray:

Lord, may you bless the world,  
give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts.

You ask us not to be afraid.

Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful.

But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm.

Tell us again: 'Do not be afraid' (Mt 28:5).

And we, together with Peter, 'cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us' (cf. 1Pet 5:7)."

*Amen!*