



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Library of the Apostolic Palace

Sunday, 29 March 2020 [Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning,

The Gospel passage for this fifth Sunday of Lent is the resurrection of Lazarus (cf. Jn 11:1-45). Lazarus was Martha and Mary's brother; they were good friends of Jesus. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, Lazarus has already been dead for four days. Martha runs towards the Master and says to Him: "If you had been here, my brother would not have died!" (v. 21). Jesus replies to her: "Your brother will rise again" (v. 23) and adds: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (v. 25). Jesus makes himself seen as the Lord of life, he who is capable of giving life even to the dead. Then Mary and other people arrive, in tears, and so Jesus — the Gospel says — "was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.... Jesus wept" (vv. 33, 35). With this turmoil in his heart, he goes to the tomb, thanks the Father who always listens to him, has the tomb opened and cries aloud: "Lazarus, come out!" (v. 43). And Lazarus emerges with "his hands and feet bound with bandages and his face wrapped with a cloth" (v. 44).

Here we can experience first hand that God is life and gives life, yet takes on the tragedy of death. Jesus could have avoided the death of his friend Lazarus, but he wanted to share in our suffering for the death of people dear to us, and above all, he wished to demonstrate God's dominion over death. In this Gospel passage we see that the faith of man and the omnipotence of God, of God's love, seek each other and finally meet. It is like a two lane street: the faith of man and the omnipotence of God's love seek each other and finally meet. We see this in the cry of Martha and Mary, and of all of us with them: "If you had been here!". And God's answer is not a speech, no, God's answer to the problem of death is Jesus: "I am the resurrection and the life" ... have faith. Amid grief, continue to have faith, even when it seems that death has won. Take away the stone from your heart! Let the Word of God restore life where there is death.

Today, too, Jesus repeats to us: "Take away the stone". God did not create us for the tomb, but rather he created us for life, [which is] beautiful, good, joyful. But "through the devil's envy death entered the world" (Wis 2:24) says the Book of Wisdom, and Jesus Christ came to free us from its

bonds.

We are thus called to take away the stones of all that suggests death: for example, the hypocrisy with which faith is lived, is death; the destructive criticism of others, is death; insults, slander, are death; the marginalization of the poor, is death. The Lord asks us to remove these stones from our hearts, and life will then flourish again around us. Christ lives, and those who welcome him and follow him come into contact with life. Without Christ, or outside of Christ, not only is life not present, but one falls back into death.

The resurrection of Lazarus is also a sign of the regeneration that occurs in the believer through Baptism, with full integration within the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Through the action and power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is a person who journeys in life as a new creature: a creature for life, who goes towards life.

May the Virgin Mary help us to be compassionate like her son Jesus, who made our suffering his own. May each of us be close to those who are in difficulty, becoming for them a reflection of God's love and tenderness, which frees us from death and makes life victorious.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, the Secretary-General of the United Nations recently launched an appeal for an “immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world”, citing the current Covid-19 crisis, which does not recognise borders. An appeal for a total ceasefire.

I join those who have welcomed this appeal and I invite everyone to follow it by ceasing all forms of hostility, promoting the creation of humanitarian aid routes, openness to diplomacy, and attentiveness to those who are in situations of great vulnerability.

May our joint fight against the pandemic bring everyone to recognize the great need to reinforce brotherly and sisterly bonds as members of a single human family. In particular, may it inspire a renewed commitment to overcome rivalries among the leaders of nations and the parties involved. Conflicts cannot be resolved through war! Antagonism and differences must be overcome through dialogue and a constructive search for peace.

At this time, my thoughts turn especially to all those people who suffer the vulnerability of being compelled to live in a group: rest homes, barracks.... In particular I would like to mention those who are in prison. I read an official note by the Commission for Human Rights which mentions the problem of overcrowded prisons, which could become a tragedy. I ask the authorities to be sensitive to this serious problem and to take the necessary measures to avoid future tragedies.

I wish everyone a Happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me; I do so for you. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci.*
