



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)

March 29, 2020

Our Resurrection

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The raising of Lazarus is a decisive miracle in Christ's public ministry. It leads to increased hostility and gives the Jewish leaders both an excuse and a motivation to actively seek the death of Jesus. This Gospel episode is so important that John dedicates an entire chapter to the story.

What is the most important message of this miracle? Without faith in Jesus, there is no resurrection: a fitting message for a Pietro Annigoni painting in Europe

right after World War II. In Annigoni's *The Resurrection of Lazarus*, Mary is at the feet of Jesus while Martha is on her feet pouring out her heart. The artist evokes a landscape of death and destruction, one too often observed in postwar Europe. Colors of decay abound. Stones are piled up like rubble. The trees are burnt, scrawny, and twisted as if after an air raid. It is ugly, rugged, barren, and dry. A small group of people have gathered to weep at the tomb.

Jesus is the only source of color and life. After Martha affirms her faith in Jesus and the resurrection, he lifts up his hand and calls out. The onlookers peer inside, perhaps having heard the sounds of rustling coming from the cave.

The message of this artwork is clear to anyone struggling with the bondage of a destructive past. Jesus wants to speak words of life and raise us from the grips of death, war, and despair. Believe in Jesus and he will raise you up! +

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A Word from Pope Francis

I invite you to think for a moment, in silence, here: Where is my interior necrosis? Where is the dead part of my soul? Where is my tomb? ...And to remove the stone, to take away the stone of shame and allow the Lord to say to us, as he said to Lazarus: "Come out!"

—Homily, April 6, 2014



Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 37:12-14

You shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and make you come up out of them, my people!

Romans 8:8-11

The one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.

John 11:1-45 or John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

Jesus told [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How is your Lenten journey bringing you deeper in faith and closer to new life in Jesus?
- Has Jesus raised you from destruction or despair? How?

Healing After Divorce

By Susan K. Rowland

I was divorced six years ago. There was no funeral, even though divorce is one of the cruelest deaths there is: the death of a marriage. Most members of my ex-husband's family, with whom I had been close for thirty years, disappeared from my life. Some were puzzled, embarrassed, or even angry. Fortunately, I had friends who called to see how I was doing and who gave me the hugs I so badly needed. But I wept alone, ate alone, and struggled with finances. Suddenly, I had nowhere to go for holidays. There were times when I felt like an outcast, like one of the lepers of Jesus' time.

Divorce is a death, worse than physical death in some ways. There is no outpouring of support and sympathy that physical death brings. Instead, the divorced person often feels alone and disgraced, especially in the parish community, which rightfully champions marriage. Also, the former spouse is still around. The initial pain of divorce is often aggravated by disputes over child support and visitation, adult children's marriages, holidays, and remarriage.

There are few people in the Church who will not experience divorce personally or through a family member, friend, or coworker. What do divorced Catholics need? What attitude should the



rest of us adopt? Here are some thoughts about the care of those who have experienced the "death" of a divorce.

In the Parish

Every parish should offer some sort of support program for the divorced and separated. Programs such as Beginning Experience

(beginningexperience.org) and DivorceCare (divorcecare.org) can be helpful to the newly divorced. In addition, many dioceses offer divorced/separated support. Check your diocesan website for information. Ideally, such a program should combine practical instruction about finances, child support, legalities, and Church annulments with informal time for people to share their stories and support one another.

Healing is the Goal

For the individual who has divorced and for his or her family, healing is the first priority—not judgment, blame, or explanations. Healing cannot happen completely until forgiveness happens. Since forgiveness will take time, the divorced person needs to be ready to forgive. He or she needs to say to God, "I want to forgive. I can't now, but I want to try. Please, Jesus, love him/her for me."

Forgiveness has two components:

1) letting go of the person who wronged

you, trusting that you can leave matters in God's capable hands and 2) praying for the one who has wronged you. No one can intercede for someone the way an ex-spouse can.

Decisions, Decisions

Newly divorced people must make many decisions. Some are internal: "Who am I now?" Others are external: moving, changing jobs, returning to college, volunteering. As painful as it is, divorce is an open door for people who have suffered through a bad marriage. They have agonized and struggled, hoped and pretended, lived in denial and then faced the painful truth.

The divorced need to get on with their lives. If you are a friend or family member, encourage them to do so. Let them talk about whatever they are taking on. We do this for the widowed. The divorced, too, need encouragement and support for their plans and new identity.

Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians contains what is known as the "love chapter." Usually read at weddings, it's just as appropriate when a marriage ends: "Love is patient, love is kind....It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (13:4-8). +



Lord, your life-giving spirit fills me with hope and joy. In times of trouble, help me place all my trust in you.

—From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day of Lent and Easter*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 30–April 4

Monday, Lenten Weekday:
Dn 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62
or 13:41c–62 / Jn 8:1–11


Tuesday, Lenten Weekday:
Nm 21:4–9 / Jn 8:21–30

Wednesday, Lenten Weekday:
Dn 3:14–20, 91–92, 95 / Jn 8:31–42

Thursday, Lenten Weekday:
Gn 17:3–9 / Jn 8:51–59

Friday, Lenten Weekday:
Jer 20:10–13 / Jn 10:31–42

Saturday, Lenten Weekday:
Ez 37:21–28 / Jn 11:45–56

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