

Lazarus Saturday

Gerry Rhoads

"O Lord, You said to Martha: 'I am the Resurrection,' and You confirmed Your words by actions, calling Lazarus from Hades. Through my passions I am dead; raise me also, I beseech You, in Your tender love for mankind."

Matins for Lazarus Saturday

There are many lessons in the raising of Lazarus on which we can reflect and from which we can learn and take as part of our everyday life. Two lessons in particular stand out. The first shows Jesus guiding His disciples to emphasize the importance of this miracle even before it occurs. The second lesson portrays Jesus as using Martha's great conviction of faith to reveal more of Himself to us.

When Jesus hears that Lazarus is very ill, He tells His disciples, "This sickness is not to end in death; rather it is for God's glory, that through it the Son of God may be glorified." (*John 11:4*) Through these words, Jesus is telling the disciples beforehand about the importance of this miracle. A little later, when the apostles protest about going to Bethany so slowly, Jesus must come right out and tell them that Lazarus is dead. Again He underscores the importance of this miracle by saying: "For your sakes I am glad I was not there so that you may come to believe." (*John 11:15*).

The second lesson of this miracle is shown through the conviction and faith of Martha. Even in this time of her great sorrow, she does not lose sight of her faith in Jesus, and Who He is. Jesus uses her faith to reveal even more of Himself to us when He tells her, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: whoever believes in Me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever is alive and believes in Me will never die." (*John 11:27*)

There is much we can bring into our everyday life from these two lessons. Just as the disciples needed more than one reiteration of the importance of this miracle, so we too in our daily existence must be reminded over and over again. Through the Gospel, the sermon of a priest in church, or even through the kindness of a friend, we realize the importance of God's daily plan for us. Then we can take courage from the example of Martha's conviction of faith and understanding of Jesus in order to carry out the tasks God asks of us each day.

These two lessons together—God's plan in guiding our lives and the conviction of Martha's faith—go hand in hand in teaching us to become closer friends of Christ, so that through our own lives the Son of God also may be glorified.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Hebrews 12:28 - 13:8
John 11:1-45