

Lazarus of Bethany is a figure of the New Testament whose life is restored by Jesus four days after his death, as told in today's reading. But this is not just a story from an old book. To see things properly, we must realize that we are Lazarus; we are Martha and Mary. This is also the story of how Jesus is also acting in our lives.

The story of Lazarus highlights Jesus' authority over death and offers a profound example of the hope for resurrection through faith in him. Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, were dear friends of Jesus. When their brother fell ill, the sisters sent a messenger to Jesus to tell him Lazarus was sick. Instead of hurrying to see Lazarus, Jesus remained where he was for two more days. When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead and in his tomb for four days. Jesus ordered that the gravestone be rolled away, and He then raised Lazarus from the dead.

Through this story of Lazarus, the Scriptures deliver a powerful message to the world: Jesus Christ has power over death, and those who believe in him receive everlasting life.

It shows us the power of Jesus over the last enemy of humanity: death itself. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead four days after his entombment. The event took place at Bethany. In John, this is the last of the miracles that Jesus performs before the passion, crucifixion and his own resurrection.

Theologians view the raising of Lazarus as a "pivotal miracle" which starts the chain of events that leads to the crucifixion of Jesus. The Church says that the miracle performed by Jesus returned Lazarus to ordinary earthly life. He would later die again.

The scholars tell us that not only did Christ give a remarkable proof of his Divine power in raising Lazarus, but he likewise placed before our eyes an image of our future resurrection. This shows Christ's absolute power over life and death and reveals His nature as true man and true God. Jesus also shows his humanity by his profound compassion over the pain suffered by Mary and Martha.

The scholars say that this mighty miracle is a foreshadowing of things to come, in order that the faith of His disciples and apostles, might be strengthened. In this way they might believe and not doubt when they saw their Lord and Master in the hour of His suffering. Most of all it was to enable them to have hope, when they saw His Body laid in the sepulchre, that He who had raised up Lazarus would Himself rise again.

Jesus speaks one of the most powerful promises ever: Whoever believes in Jesus Christ received spiritual life that even physical death can never take away. It is absolutely essential to our faith as Christians that we believe in the resurrection of the dead.

One of the important things for me is that Jesus revealed his compassion for people through a genuine display of emotion. Even though he knew that Lazarus would live, he was still moved to weep with the ones he loved.

Martha came out to Jesus. She doesn't even wait until he reaches her door. We don't know what Jesus said to her when he met her. Perhaps he didn't say anything and just embraced her, or even kissed her on the cheek, like we so often do. Jesus cared about their sorrow. He was not timid to show emotion, and we should not be ashamed to express our true feelings to God. Like Martha and Mary, we can be open with God because he cares for us.

My own thoughts also turn to the waiting that Martha and Mary experienced. Many times, we wait for the Lord in the midst of a terrible situation and wonder why he doesn't respond more quickly. Often God allows our situation to go from bad to worse because he's planning to do something powerful and wonderful; he has a purpose that will bring even greater glory to God.

This story brings together the themes of faith, divine power, and the promise of eternal life. Like Lazarus being unbound, we too must shed the trappings of our old lives. We are called to let go of the chains of sin, fear, doubt, and anything that hinders our spiritual growth.

So, how can we apply what we see here in our daily lives?

First, Trust in God's timing. Jesus did not immediately go to heal Lazarus; instead, He waited, showing that God's timing is perfect. So, when facing delays in life, prayers unanswered, trust that God is working behind the scenes. Be patient and have faith.

Hold on to faith during difficult times. Martha and Mary were heartbroken, but Jesus encouraged them to believe in Him. Even when things seem hopeless, continue to trust God. Pray, seek His guidance, and surround yourself with faith-filled people.

Believe in the power of Christ. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, proving His divine power. No situation is too far gone for God to restore. Whether it's broken relationships, finances, or health, keep believing in His power to bring new life.

Be compassionate like Jesus. Before performing this miracle, "Jesus wept", showing deep empathy for the suffering of others. Show kindness and compassion to those who are hurting. Comfort them with your presence, prayers, and encouragement.

Jesus acts in our lives like He acted in the lives of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. He is still calling those who are spiritually dead.

Jesus says, Come Out, come out Mark and Cathy and Mike, listen to the sound of my voice. Come out from depression, loneliness, pain and addictions. Come out from fear of the future, from isolation. Come out from a life being strangled by sin And live again.