FATHER GARY PENNINGS

PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Lent, we hear the Gospel account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It recounts the death of Jesus' good friend and how Jesus raised him from the dead "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Lazarus' being restored to life is a preview of an even greater "rising from the dead" that will take place on the first Easter morning. It is a reminder to us of the goodness, the power, and the providence of Almighty God. God has power over death and even the most tragic of human events, biologically speaking, can have the most glorious outcome when submitted to the power of God's grace.

Lazarus' death was not so much about adding a few years to Lazarus' life (because remember he would have to die again), but it was about bringing Lazarus and others to faith in the enduring and saving power of Jesus Christ, Savior of the World. After the raising of Lazarus, so many came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, that the Jewish religious authorities contemplated killing Lazarus because his living presence was itself a testimony to the saving power of Jesus.

Life's many challenges: illnesses, financial hardships, the seemingly downward spiral of morals in western society, as well as the numerous other tragedies that we read about in the daily news reports might feel to many of us like a kind of "death". But the Gospel invites us to increase our faith in Jesus Christ, in the redeeming power of His cross and in the promise of His resurrection. Our present reality, however promising or dismal it might seem, invites us to die to ourselves and live for Him, trusting in the power of His saving grace.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life,

Fr. Gary