

Sacrifice of Praise

Fifth Sunday of Lent: Ezekiel 27:12-14 / Romans 8:8-11 / John 11:1-45

Finding the Light of the World, in the World

In this week's Gospel, Jesus learns Lazarus is gravely ill. Out of great love for his friend, he chooses to travel back to Bethany. Those traveling with Jesus worry about his safety. Jesus tells the disciples they will travel during the light of day because anyone who walks in the light will not stumble — speaking here both figuratively and spiritually. Jesus is the “light of this world” (Jn 11:9), and we are called to walk in his teachings and his promises; if we walk by the light of Jesus, we will not risk stumbling into temptation nor falling away from faith.

Jesus shares seven “I Am” statements in the Scriptures. In this Gospel passage, he describes himself as light of the world, also “the resurrection and the life” (v. 25). Our hope for eternal life rests in Jesus Christ as Messiah, Savior. Could you answer Jesus with the affirmation of the belief that Martha did when he said to her: “Whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (vv. 25-26).

She answered, “Yes, Lord, I ... believe.” Can you make this proclamation in your own life? Do you see the generosity of God in your life, that you can trust in his



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FOR REFLECTION

- How would you categorize your ability to trust God?
- Which prayers fortify or comfort you when you feel your faith wavering?
- Does Jesus' generosity toward his friends provide consolation or hope as you present your supplications to the Lord?

power whatever the circumstances? Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Sometimes we are dead in our faith — whether in our prayer life, in lackluster participation in the sacraments, or in lack of time spent reading the Scriptures. We may have allowed it to wither and maybe even develop, dare we say, a stench.

Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, are offered as

examples of contemplative and active prayers. When Jesus first visits them in Bethany, we find Martha anxious and busy, upset with her sister's contemplative stance at Jesus' feet. Jesus challenges her to find a balance in her life between work and prayer; she was missing that one thing needed — dedicated time with the Lord amidst all the other things to do. In John 11, with her proc-

lamation of faith in Jesus as Messiah, we witness the fruit of following Jesus' gentle admonition.

Lent is an opportunity for us to answer this same gentle exhortation from Jesus in our own lives. Beloved, you are anxious about a great many things, but only one thing is needed. Do you read those words and begin to make a list of the things for which you are worried? Can you recount the last time you sat at the Master's feet to learn from him? Do you believe you can come to Jesus with your supplications, no matter how dire or how many? Do you trust him with your life?



An Act of Trust

The word **supplication** comes from the Latin verb *supplicare*, which means to plead humbly, or to beseech. A prayer of supplication calls for one to humble themselves before the Lord and ask (petition) for a favor only he can give. It is an act of trust in the angel Gabriel's words, "for nothing will be impossible for God" (Lk 1:37).

PRAYER TIP

Prayer bears fruit in our lives when offered in:

DEVOTION

with earnest belief

HUMILITY

with reverent awe

CONFIDENCE

with expectant hope

PERSEVERANCE

with unwavering patience

TRUST

with abandon to the will of God

CATECHISM CONNECTION



"Jesus also prays for us — in our place and on our behalf. All our petitions were gathered up, once for all, in his cry on the Cross and, in his Resurrection, heard by the Father. This is why he never ceases to intercede for us with the Father. If our prayer is resolutely united with that of Jesus, in trust and boldness as children, we obtain all that we ask in his name, even more than any particular thing: the Holy Spirit himself, who contains all gifts."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2741

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you told your disciples to ask and it will be answered. In your mercy, what we receive always aligns with the will of your Father. If we, broken and sinful, strive to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our heavenly Father provide. I bring my supplications to you, trusting in your love and mercy.

Remaining Steadfast in Prayer



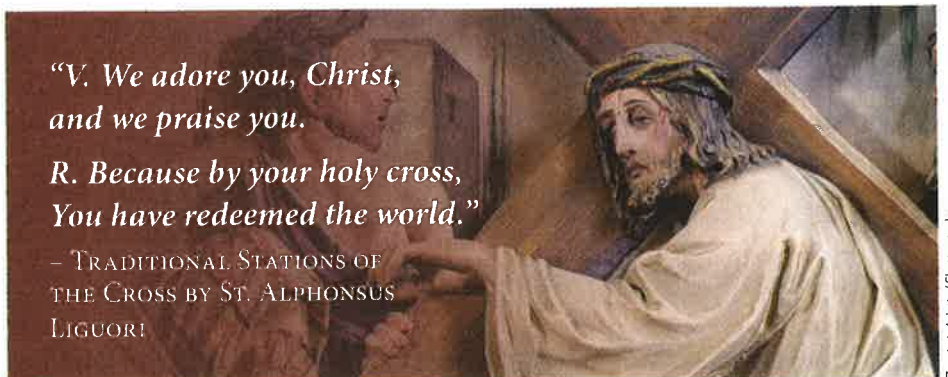
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St. Gemma Galgani preferred to engage in informal prayer in the form of continually conversing with God throughout the day and night. This way, she believed, was the way to assure she remained in the presence of God at all times. Gemma spent a year suffering from spinal tuberculosis. After two failed attempts at reciting a novena to the Sacred Heart, she persevered and tried once more. This time, not only did she complete the nine days of prayer, but she also received a miraculous and complete cure of her ills upon its completion. Grateful to be cured, her focus remained on Jesus: "I too was pleased, but not so much that I had been cured as that Jesus had chosen me for his child."

"V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world."

— TRADITIONAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS BY ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI



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