



Christ in Our Neighborhood

March 26, 2023

Prayer

Father,
help us to be like Christ your Son,
who loved the world and died for our salvation. Inspire
us by His love, guide us by His example, who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for
ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14

As we approach the season of Easter, we
take time this weekend to reflect on the
promise of immortality.

The Prophet Ezekiel presents an awesome picture of
graves opening up and the dead rising from them.

The promise is for a restored Israel where all people will
“Know God.” We read:

“I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will
settle you upon your land; thus shall you KNOW that I
am the Lord.”

As Christians, we speak of a new Israel (a new Jerusalem)
which is heaven. Heaven is more than a place. Instead, it
is a state of being - of being one with God. To “Know
God” is to be one with God.

True life - even before we die and are raised to heaven - is
to know and live with God. As Christians, we live when
we live for God!

Question

How am I living with God now?
How am I living for God now?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Romans 8:8-11

A question from an old Catholic Catechism goes like this:

Q: Why did God make you?

*A: God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve
Him in this world, and to be happy with
Him for ever in heaven.*

This is our purpose! We live to live for
God. In fact, if we don't live for God, then
we don't live. Our life has no purpose here
or in the world hereafter.

If we are honest, we know that we can fall
short in our desire to live for God.

Thankfully, as St. Paul reminds us in our Second
Reading, we have the Holy Spirit who lives for God in us.

The Holy Spirit is God and the Spirit finds a dwelling place
in us making it possible for us to live for God. St. Paul
writes:

“Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong
to him.”

Thankfully, this Spirit has been planted within us to live for
God - to know Him, love Him, to serve Him, and to be
happy with Him for ever in heaven.

Question

How has the Spirit of Christ moved me to know, love, and
serve God?

*The commentaries over these 6 weeks of Lent
are presented by Bishop John Dolan
of the Diocese of Phoenix.*

5th Sunday of Lent

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Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix. This free program may be found online at dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood. Download free PDFs for your parish groups or family gatherings.

Commentary

Gospel: John 11:1-45

Our Gospel today invites us to be restored to God in Christ.

Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, is resuscitated from death. The resuscitated life of Lazarus is symbolic for a restored life with God.

It is Christ who gives us the Spirit of life and restores us so that we can live - live for God!

Christ gives us this restored life here and now; not just on the last day! He says to Martha:

“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

Now, in this story, Lazarus is resuscitated. Resuscitation is not resurrection. Eventually, Lazarus would die and be raised from the dead. However, this Gospel story today is a foretaste of the real Resurrection account of Jesus on Easter.

One day, we will all be raised from the dead and, if we live for God, we will be raised to Eternal Life. However, this does require that we respond to the Spirit of life within us who calls us to live for God here and now.

God chooses to restore us to life. Our life only has meaning if we live for God!

Question

Martha was asked by Jesus if she believed. How do I express my belief that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?

This Week's Task

In Lent, we have an opportunity to be restored to life in Christ through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is a perfect way to prepare for Easter and renew our Baptismal commitment to Christ, the Spring of living water, who washes away our sins.

Group Prayer

In preparation for Reconciliation before Easter, the leader invites the group to make a brief examination of conscience in silence. Then, the leader invites the community to say the Confiteor:

I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The leader invites the gathering to pray the psalm for the 5th Sunday of Lent.

Psalm 23

Psalm

Response: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;
LORD, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to my voice in supplication.

R:With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,
LORD, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness,
that you may be revered.

R:With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

I trust in the LORD;
my soul trusts in his word.
More than sentinels wait for the dawn,
let Israel wait for the LORD.

R:With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

For with the LORD is kindness
and with him is plenteous redemption;
And he will redeem Israel
from all their iniquities.

R:With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Conclude with an OUR FATHER