

Jn 11:1-45; Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11 New Life

**On that cross...He gave everything to the world: *It is finished* (Jn 19:30).
And from that cross...He gave Himself to heaven: *into Your hands I commend my spirit* (Lk 23:46).**

Those are your words now. Because when you accomplish your mission, you too will give yourself to heaven. What is your mission? Jesus gave you life. Now you must give life to others.

It began with a promise. Six hundred years before Christ, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision of a field covered with dead bones.

Those dead bones represented Israel--conquered and exiled, dead in sin and idolatry, a human race without God.

God joined those bones, covered them with flesh and blew life into them. He said: *I will open your graves and have you rise from them* (Ez 37:12). And: *I will put my spirit in you that you may live* (Ez 37:14).

That promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

There is a problem. There is a battle raging within us. Because even if the Spirit of God is inside of us (baptism); the spirit of the flesh continues to demand that we serve it instead of God (Rom 8:10).

But there is a solution. The solution is Jesus Christ.

Lazarus had been dead for four days. Martha and Mary complained: *Lord, if you had been here, [our] brother would not have died* (Jn 11:21, 32).

What about us? Lord God, how can you love us when you allow us to suffer? I don't know. And there is so much about God we cannot know yet.

But we can choose to believe anyway. Martha and Mary did: *Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are...the Son of God* (Jn 11:27). We too will make a profession of faith when we say the Creed:

We believe in Jesus' promise: *I am the resurrection...whoever believes in me, even if he dies will live* (Jn 11:25).

And we believe in Jesus' promise: *I am...the life...everyone who lives and believes in me will never die* (Jn 11:26).

That means Jesus gives us life—not only resurrection from the dead, but a new life right now—He empowers us to overcome sin. He empowers us to overcome suffering. And He empowers us to overcome death.

Then why did Jesus suffer? When Jesus saw Mary and the Jews weeping, *he became deeply troubled. Jesus wept.* And as He approached the tomb, *Jesus [became] perturbed [angry] again.*

It was like a battle raging inside of Jesus. He must have known, without a doubt, that He had the power to raise Lazarus.

Yet He allowed His human weakness to get the best of Him: tears for the crying, and anger at death.

It's as if He chose to remain one with us. Like He will on that cross. Why? To love us. And to show us how much He loves us.

Because when we laugh, He laughs with us. When we cry, He cries with us. And when we suffer, He suffers with us.

A visionary said that when Jesus cried out: *Lazarus, come out!* (Jn 11:43); and *Untie him and let him go* (Jn 11:44), the corpse sat up and everyone thought they were seeing a ghost.¹

But Jesus breathed His Holy Spirit into him, and a dark vapor—the spirit of death, like a black winged devil—came out of him. Freed from the spirit of the flesh, Lazarus came back to life.²

What Jesus did, at the tomb for Lazarus, set the world on fire. Like the Book of Revelation says: *the one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new”* (Rev 21:5).

For as true man [Jesus] wept for Lazarus his friend and as eternal God [He] raised him from the tomb,...

¹ Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich; *The Complete Visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich*, (The Catholic Book Club 2014) p541.

² Id. At 542.

*just as, taking pity on the human race, [Jesus] leads us by sacred mysteries to new life.*³

So take what is yours--that new life, when you confess your sins.

Untie the bonds of sin. Rise up from that tomb, and into a brand-new life with a heart full of His love, full of His compassion, and full of His mercy.

Take what is yours--that new life, at the Last Supper on that altar,...

when you put Jesus' body and blood into your body and blood—so that the heart of Jesus Christ—two hearts beating as one—comes alive inside of you.

And take what is yours--that new life, by following Jesus in His way of holiness.

Because Jesus is asking you the same question: “I am the resurrection and the life...and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

What will you say? Say yes. Then live what you believe, and become what you believe.

You know, there are so many Lazarus's who seem alive, and yet, they are really trapped in a tomb of addictions, anger, despair, and sin.

Become life-giving to them: love more, console more, make peace more, give more, and forgive more—with the Heart of Jesus Christ--alive forever inside of you.

Don't just sit there. Jesus brought you back to life. Now it's your turn to do what He did: “Lazarus come out!” “Untie him and let him go!”

³ The Roman Missal (Catholic Book Publishing Corp., NJ 2011) p 118.