

## **Fifth week of Lent**

### **Life confronted Death**

Jesus stood before the tomb. Life confronted death.

“Lazarus, come out,” Jesus commanded, echoing the primordial “Let there be light.” In the beginning, there was light; here, there was life. The dead man came out of the tomb.

This took place in Bethany. Jesus’ friend Lazarus had been dead for four days, and the village mourned with Martha and Mary. As Jesus entered, the two sisters went out to meet him.

They said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Jesus urged them to hold onto their belief to see the glory of God. When they saw their brother alive, their faith triumphed over despair.

God’s name is “I am”. ‘Am’ means ‘being,’ ‘existence,’ and ‘life.’ God is the author of life and so God gives life.

All creatures depend on the Creator for their existence. Psalm 104 goes this way: “When you open your hand, they are well filled. When you hide your face, they panic. Take away their breath, they perish and return to the dust. Send forth your spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the earth.”

Jesus the Son of God said, “I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again.”

On the cross, he did not lose his life; he offered it. Death could not destroy him; instead, he destroyed death. Death died that day.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, his return to life was temporary. He would die again. It was a quantitative extension of his earthly life. The resurrection Jesus offers us, however, is a qualitative transformation of life. We are called to live forever.

Next week, we enter Holy Week. We will participate in the sacred events, from Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem to his resurrection from the dead. As St. Thomas said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him”; and with him, let us rise to new life.