

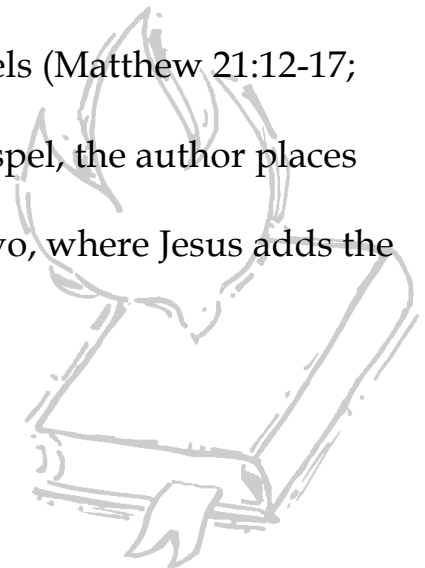
Day 8 of Novena The Raising of Lazarus

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
July 24, 2026

Ez 37: 12-14
Ps 130: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Jn 11: 1-45

“Jesus wept.” Those three words really affect me concerning our Lord’s disposition because it only happens twice in the Gospels: when Jesus enters Jerusalem for the time before his death in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 11: 41) and in this passage from John, where Jesus grieves over the loss of his friend (Jn 11: 35).

The *Seventh Sign* in the Gospel of John, Jesus raising Lazarus from the Dead, serves as a type of “last straw” for those leaders in the Sanhedrin – the Pharisee, and the Sadducees. In the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the story of Jesus tossing the tables of the money changers and telling people, “This is my Father’s house, not a place to sell animals,” can be found towards the end of the three gospels (Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; and Luke 19:45-48). In John’s gospel, the author places that at the *beginning* of the gospel in Chapter Two, where Jesus adds the



following to the story from the Synoptic renderings: “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it on three days.” In this rendering of the money changer story, the leaders of the faith thought that Jesus claimed he could resurrect the Temple of Jerusalem; rather, Jesus was talking about the temple of his body, that God is able to raise the dead to life.

As Jesus begins the Johannine ministry with this theme, he reveals in today’s gospel that what he forecasted was not empty words but proved that God could bring the dead back to life. As we have discussed in this Novena, the healing of the human person is incidental – from Lazarus to Matilda Cunnea and forward, even the healed people of faith eventually die. Yet, what Jesus tells us in the scriptures that we must look beyond the human senses to comprehend what God truly can do; in the Lazarus story, Jesus gives proof that his so-called hypothesis was true.

The purpose of today’s gospel story is not to say that Jesus is going to give us eternal life on earth, because we have already paid the price for that Original Sin – we lost the chance for everlasting life on earth.

Because of that Original Sin, we chose to live in a world of corruption, the world of violence, the world of greed, the world of hatred, the world

where people tear each other down instead of building each other up. We live in a world where Jesus revealed himself to be the Son of God, as love itself, yet regardless of what he said and did, our Lord was demeaned, he was beaten, he was mocked, and he was nailed to a cross. I ask you - would he even come down knowing full well what would happen to him? Why would anyone do this? You read the lives of the saints associated with the United States - Isaac Jogues had his hands mangled, Damien of Molokai contracted the same illness of those for whom he was trying to care. If you know you would suffer this greatly, why do the ministry in the first place?

The answer was simple - He was in the form of God did not deem equality with God; rather he took the form of a slave (Philippians 2). For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son so that anyone who believed in him might not die but might have eternal life (John 3: 16). He came down to earth because the Father asked him to do so. He came down on earth because the Father loved the Son through the power of the Spirit, and the Father and the Son wished to share that Spirit with

us, which was not possible because we could not see it; we could comprehend who God was or is.

Jesus made it very clear in the Gospel of John, "I am the Father's Son." According to St. Augustine, the Father and Son are bonded together by a spirit in a way that we cannot comprehend but is best represented by a husband joined to his wife so they are no longer two but one body (Mt 19: 6). God came into the world down to reveal that Holy Spirit that exists in us... and yet we still do not want to believe. We still do not fill the churches because we have doubt, just like Thomas in our gospel, who wanted to die with Jesus in Jerusalem and the Sanhedrin had doubt that Jesus would rise from the dead.

Even today, we still doubt that that Blessed Sacrament truly is the body, blood, soul and divinity of God in the tabernacle (the Pew Research Center claimed that 2/3 of all Catholics DO NOT believe in the real presence where EWTN in 2024 argued just the opposite). We doubt the real presence, we doubt the saving power of God because if we really believed in what God can do for us, we would be here at these Masses and in this church constantly. That is why when we have our

faithful adorers here every single day, praying in front of that tabernacle, singing that song of adoration, singing, “Bendito, bendito, bendito sea Dios,” which is associated with *Corpus Christi* and with adoration in our Hispanic communities.

They are praying for you. *They* are praying for me. *We* are praying for you. *We and they* know that eventually each of us will be called to God at the end of our lives. That said... if we truly believe, if we spend our time with God, and if we realize that God makes the impossible possible, then we understand why this story of Lazarus is so powerful, because Jesus wept. He lost his friend, and then he rose his friend from the dead. Because of that good act, because of all the wonderful things Jesus did, all seven signs, every single sign, the Pharisees and the Sadducees and those in the Sanhedrin became angrier and angrier with our Lord, leading to God dying on the cross... and then rising again in three days, as was said at the beginning of the gospel.

During this Novena, when we understand that God makes the impossible possible, we realize why it was possible for St. Anne to give birth to the Blessed Mother, a woman who could not conceive a child.

Back in the first century, it was assumed that if you could not bear children, it was because you were sinful towards God, which we understand in today's age this is not the case. In the first century, though, those of faith understood that God gave life to a woman who was barren, that St. Anne gave birth to the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Theotokos or God-bearer, that our Blessed Mother became the first tabernacle that held the real presence of God in the New Testament.

In this story of the impossible made possible through St. Anne, we learn that God came down to Earth in a possible way, in a loving way, in a sacrificial way, through a woman protected from Original Sin by the power of the Holy Spirit through what we call Christian charity. We learn that God is not about God; God is love itself, who makes our lives more important than God's life. *This* is the reason why we are here, because of St. Anne, our Blessed Mother and, infinitely more important, that Real Presence of God.

The *real* reason why this Novena is so important is not because of the few people that watch these Masses, but because these Masses are

offered for you, for the living, for the dead, for the sick, the depressed, for all those intentions on the St. Anne Sodality prayer cards that we have received from all of you. Here at St. Patrick's Church where I celebrate this particular Novena Mass, the faithful in this community have had enough faith to give back to the parish in all kinds of ways, not just by renovating the buildings, renovating a gymnasium that was dilapidated, repairing the gym floor, turning shower rooms and a shuffleboard room into meeting rooms, creating bathrooms on the first floor, creating a kitchenette on the first floor, renovating broken-down walls that our Hispanic community have built up for us, and Joe Kraus has built up for us because they love this church.

Over at St. Anne's, the purchase of chairs, people have responded through the purchase of air conditioners from outsiders who do not even belong to the parish and who live states away from us are willing to support the parish because they love God, and they have faith in what we are trying to do. They do all this and, much more importantly, they have brought back adoration and Novenas to the parish, nights of prayer and social.

Nevertheless, no matter how much you love, no matter how much you give, you are always going to have detractors who are going to turn lemonade back into lemons, who will question God and God's will that will try to tear down what God builds up.

So we continue celebrating these Masses, regardless of what anyone else says. We continue producing and uploading the Masses, which take forever to upload. We continue to keep praying for you, even if people are not watching us and people do not remember us. The communion of saints have not forgotten you. God has not forgotten you because God can take the impossible and make it possible. God can raise the dead on earth, but our goal in life is not to live on earth, but to get to heaven for the rest of our existence, where there will be no more suffering, no more tears, no more crying, but just for us to be with God, and hopefully to be with all of you in the kingdom of heaven.

Keep praying for us. We keep praying for you. We do this together, knowing full well that miracles can take place, but the miracles are not just to bring health to people and raise people from the dead, but the miracles are to reveal God's saving mission that God wants to get us to

heaven. If we have enough faith in God, all things are possible in heaven and on earth. Let us embrace that message. Let us live that message. Let us share that message with the people that we meet. This is our prayer.