

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to John (John 11:38-44)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," He said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that You have heard me. I knew that You always hear Me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent Me." When He had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ If you believe, you will see the glory of God

The sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one You love is sick." (John 11:3). Jesus was told that Lazarus was close to death but He stayed where He was for another two days! Mary and Martha must be wondering desperately why He was so slow in coming. Their beloved only brother, their pillar of security, comfort and protection was in danger of leaving them forever and Jesus showed no signs of coming to their rescue. Was Jesus uncaring and insensitive? Thoughts like these must have tempted them sorely. How many times was I tempted by these same thoughts that the Lord did not care when I seemed to be pressed from all sides in my trouble and difficulties?

When He heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." (John 11:4). Jesus explained to those around Him that Lazarus' sickness will not end in death. As such, He was in no hurry to go to the sisters. Unknown to the poor sisters, the whole event was to serve the glory of God so as to increase their faith in Him. Have I ever thought that my trials were sent to me to test my faith so that it may deepen in order that God can transform my interior and so manifest His glory? In such circumstances, my despair was really useless.

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). The Lord tells us that even in situations where human wisdom has completely given up hope, God can still manifest His glory if there is faith. With God, nothing is impossible. (Luke 1:37). Even the dead can be raised up. We need to prepare the groundwork of our hearts for the Lord to manifest His glory. God takes us through trials in our lives that we may manifest our faith in Him and so deepen our trust and love for Him. We need these trials. These trials are our strengths on the journey towards His victory in our hearts.

God's glory unfolds when there is faith. Jesus cured the blind man in Bethsaida not instantaneously but in stages. At first the blind man could only see people looking like trees. Could not the Almighty Lord cure him in one stage? More important than the miracle itself, the Lord is bringing up the level of the faith of the blind man by making him manifest his faith even when he was not healed immediately. Let us be patient and wait on the Lord in our trials and difficulties, knowing that our trust in God will never be in vain, and that once the testing is over, our hearts will never be the same. Testing is part of becoming a mature spiritual follower of Christ.

Conversation with the Lord

Precious Lord, I praise You for Your infinite love and wisdom. I embrace all the trials and crosses that You sent into my life for my growing into a mature Christian. Help me not to rely on my human wisdom in situations in my life that seem totally hopeless but always to submit myself to unflinching trust in Your Divine Love, Divine Mercy and Divine Power. For Your ways are not my ways (cf. Isaiah 55:8). Jesus, be my strength against every evil and temptation that stand in my way. Jesus, be my hope against every discouragement that comes up against me. Lord, send forth Your Spirit and ask Him to place the gift of fortitude in my heart. Through this grace of fortitude, help me to be patient in the face of all trials and difficulties. Give me holy boldness through fortitude to press on amidst every difficulty. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, come to my aid always. Thank You Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.