



Out of the Tomb into the Light

5th Sunday of Lent, Cycle A

April 2, 2017 – 10:00 a.m., 12 Noon

1. St. Augustine once said that Scripture is ever ancient, ever new
 - I find myself often amazed at how well and beautifully the Scriptures, written over 2,000 years ago still speaks to us – here and now
 - and that passages we read frequently continue to provide a depth of meaning beyond words alone
2. Today's Gospel is one of those Scriptures packed with meaning
 - it's the story of the raising of Lazarus
 - we have heard it many times and may be tempted to say, "I know that one"
 - but today I'd like you to think about it a little differently
 - so here's the questions I'd ask you to consider: *How do you imagine Lazarus felt about being raised from the dead?*
3. Remember that Lazarus wasn't resurrected
 - resurrection involves moving from death into a perfect life
 - Resurrection is what happened to Jesus on Easter and what we hope will happen to us on the last day
 - Lazarus, however, was not resurrected
 - he was resuscitated
 - instead of being called forward into a new and perfect life, Lazarus was called backward into the life that he had just left 4 days earlier
 - that life had ended with a serious sickness whose ravages still scarred his body
 - Lazarus was called back into a life where there would be further sickness and further pain, a life that would again end with a death he would have to endure
4. So, how do we imagine that Lazarus felt about being called back to that life?
 - could we picture him suddenly waking up in the still, dark tomb and hearing Jesus from outside calling: "Lazarus come out!"
 - "Come out? I like it here. It's peaceful. Safe. Easy."
 - no more pain or suffering or worry or anxiety
 - could Lazarus have thought even for a moment, "Maybe if I lie very still, he'll just go away?"
5. But Lazarus did come out – called by Jesus to return
 - out of the tomb, into the light, back into the reality in which we live
 - and by this action, Lazarus becomes an example of what discipleship means
 - because a disciple is a person who has the courage to leave behind what is peaceful,

- safe, and easy and answer the call of Christ
 - willing to move from complacency to action, from passivity to participation
6. Every day Christ is calling us to “come out” into the real world where our responsibilities lie and that’s hard to do
- a friend likes to say, “I want my princess life back!” and my response is, “Good luck with that!”
 - because each day we are challenged to go beyond the easy, beyond what is good for me and into what God wants
 - perhaps he is calling us to re-enter into difficult or challenging relationships
 - maybe I’m called to take up the burden of grief over a loved one we have lost
 - perhaps struggle with a sickness that is threatening our future
 - maybe he is calling us out of complacency to get involved, make a difference, take a risk change someone’s life for the better and rise from the tomb of our own self-centeredness
 - maybe God is calling me to take a new look at life from a new angle, a new perspective – to leave behind negativity, judgment, bitterness, anger
 - each of us is called to a newness because God wants us to live life fully
7. Every time that Jesus calls us to “come out,” we can be tempted to choose what is easy, most convenient, comfortable
- to lie in our tombs of denial, fear, inactivity and hope that he just goes away
 - But Lazarus shows us that a disciple is one who answers God’s call, stands up and walks
 - he becomes a witness to what is possible with God’s help, new life for those who believe
 - and that action of Lazarus is not without hope
 - because when we leave the tomb behind, we discover that we are not alone
 - Jesus is by our side
 - as our eyes re-adjust to the light of the real world in which we live, no longer tinted by grief and sorrow
 - but adjusted to the splendor, and beauty of life as we live it