



Things to Ponder

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Fifth Sunday of Lent – John 11:1-45

Dear Parish Family,

Death is frequently portrayed in the Bible as a result of sin. Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas have reflected on the story of the *raising of Lazarus* as Jesus' most direct confrontation with the power of death prior to his own saving death and resurrection. As I read the daily news, I cannot help but note the frequent link between sin and its most concrete consequence — death. Crimes of passion and greed are evident even in our own neighborhoods. There is, however, a more subtle form of death that is less evident, but equally serious. The theme of our recent parish retreat was “*Where was God when my world fell apart?*” Crises are both danger zones and opportunities. Two forms of death are presented to us in these moments. We can choose the death of despair or we can die to our own desires and expectations and choose hope. The image of God revealed in today's gospel from the eleventh chapter of John is succinctly summarized in these words of Jesus after learning of the sickness of Lazarus:

**“This illness is not to end in death,
but is for the glory of God, that
the Son of God may be glorified
through it...Let us go back
to Judea.”
(John 11, 4.7.)**

God never gives up on us, but constantly invites us into a deeper relationship. In his *Purgatorio*, Dante described the primordial sin as pride. It is a “*turning in on one self*.” A manifestation of this sin is the desire to be *in control*. The intent of Lent is to allow the grace of Christ to expose this vestige of *original sin* in all of us and to invite us to trust more radically in the saving grace of Christ's death and resurrection. Along with Martha and Mary, we are challenged to choose hope. In two weeks, we will be asked as were they with regard to the identity of Jesus as the *resurrection* and the *life*: **Do you believe?**

Yours in Christ,

Rev. William Foley

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