



Things to Ponder

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Reflections – John 11:1-45

Good afternoon, Everyone:

Being a Deacon, it is so unusual for me to sleep in on a Sunday! (Smile).

I have been thinking about this Sunday's Gospel (John 11:1-45), which deals with the raising of Lazarus - definitely one of my most favorite stories in Scripture. It speaks at so many human and spiritual levels.

Some thoughts:

Several years ago, my wife and I went to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage. We traveled to Bethany and visited the tomb that has been historically venerated by the Church for centuries as the actual tomb where Lazarus was buried. I remember we had to climb down a long flight of narrow, stone steps to the dark and damp tomb below. In the tomb, we had to duck to move from one passage to the next where the body would have been laid.

When a small group had gathered deep down in the earth (we took turns in groups since space was limited), our Guide led us in a brief prayer, and then asked a very disturbing question; one which I remember even to this day: "What do you want to bury and leave behind in this tomb?" A question we can all reflect upon and answer in our own personal way. What would you leave behind?

If I were there today, I probably would say: I want to leave behind all my fears, anxieties, and worries about this worldwide pandemic, and trust much more in God and all the people who love and support me. I would want to hear and embrace the words of Jesus: "Do not be afraid!"

I also remember we had to then climb up these steep, slippery, rugged-stone steps all the way back to the entrance of the tomb. It was exhausting. Before my visit, I had always thought Lazarus simply "pop out" of the tomb and into light. No way. In hearing Jesus' command, "Come forth," he would have had to duck between the narrow passages, and then climb up all those steps to the top and into the sunlight. I never realized that.

In reflecting on this, it made me realize that it is a hard journey - often up dark, slippery, and rugged steep steps, from darkness to light, from addiction to freedom, from brokenness to healing, from sin to forgiveness/wholeness/redemption. I may be different, but that spoke to me. That is often my faith journey! And I am still climbing at times!

These are some random thoughts on this incredibly powerful passage, which I hope you will find the time to read, and take some time to focus on what you are “seeing and hearing” from this beloved Gospel.

We are here for each other,

Deacon David

“Hope does not disappoint!” (Romans 5:5)

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