

Easter Greetings from the Presiding Bishop



16 March 2016 Anno Domini

*¹Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ²(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) ³Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. ⁴When Jesus heard that, he said, **This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.** (John 11:1-4)*

Not only did our Lord Jesus Christ teach us by His Word, but also by His life - for both His Words and His Life are the Word of God. We were too blind to view the grandeur of Heaven with our feeble understanding, so the Lord taught us in Parables of Life so that we could have a beginning light of understanding. But He also taught us by the Way He traveled and by the miracles He performed. When we consider the events of Easter and the Resurrection, our minds picture a Borrowed and Opened Tomb in a peaceful Garden nearby Golgotha; but how often do we envision our own opened and borrowed tomb?

Just days before His crucifixion, our Lord raised Lazarus, a particular and familiar member of a dear family at Bethany, from the bonds of physical death. He called the name of Lazarus, and Lazarus came forth grave clothes and all.

Lazarus, we are told, was a 'certain' man who was sick; and he was the brother of two special ladies of Bethany named Martha and Mary. These sisters had prayed for Lazarus while he was deathly sick, and sent to Jesus to have Him come and heal their beloved brother. But Lazarus died, and Jesus lingered for four days before coming. This delay was for the purpose of increasing the compelling and profound faith which His planned miracle would evoke in the hearts of those who believed; and to provoke the confusion and livid hatred of

those who opposed Him. In response to the queries of His disciples, Jesus said: *Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.* (John 11:14-15) Anyone who had a very deep understanding of Jesus and His nature as both God and Man would know that death was not a terror to those whom He loved - and Jesus loved Lazarus. I might add that all born of woman have this sickness of Lazarus. We all die as a result of Adam's sin, but in Christ, we have hope of awakening.

So Jesus travels to Bethany knowing full well what He would do outside a stone burial tomb at Bethany. All who die in Christ simply fall asleep for there is no real death to those who believe. Jesus Himself had pronounced this mystery to His disciples earlier. *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.* (John 11:11)

Can you grasp the Easter significance of these events. Christ is about to be crucified, and He will demonstrate, first, His power to restore life to the dead body of Lazarus. But this is in contemplation of His rebuilding the Temple of His own Body in three days after crucifixion. Christ rose, body, soul, and spirit from the Borrowed Tomb early on the first day of the week while it was yet dark. (not at the popular sunrise) It was an example of what He would do for us. In raising Lazarus, we have an example of His power over physical death; but in His Resurrection, we have the resplendent truth of His power to raise us, body and soul, to that same eternal life to which He rose - but not before He has purchased our redemption at Calvary. He first demonstrates His power over physical death at Bethany, and the latter at the Garden Tomb.

There is a Garden Tomb (borrowed for a time) for every elect of God. And we, too, shall have an Easter Morning when the clear and distinct Voice of our Lord shall call us forth - not only to physical life, but an eternal spiritual life as well. So in your coming night of sleep, listen for His Voice!

Happy Easter to all of our friends and family scattered throughout the world.

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