

ALL SAINTS DAY (moved to 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Nov. 1) November 7, 2021

**COLLECT:** ALMIGHTY GOD, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God in glory everlasting. Amen.

**THE LESSONS:** Isaiah: 25:6-9

Psalm: 24

Epistle: Revelation 21-1-6a

Gospel: John 11:32-44

**THE SERMON:** In today's Gospel when Jesus comes to Bethany and sees Mary, she is heavily grieving. She is surrounded by others who are also weeping loudly. Her brother Lazarus has been dead for four days. She and her sister, had sent a message to Jesus that their brother, Lazarus, was very sick and they wanted Jesus to come and heal him.

When Jesus got the message of Lazarus's sickness, he said Lazarus wasn't sick enough to die from his illness, so he stayed where he was and continued to do his work for another two days.

Finally, Jesus decided to go to see Lazarus, but his disciples were afraid. Some, when they had heard Jesus' preaching, wanted to stone him and they did drive him out of town. Now the disciples are afraid the people will attack Jesus again. Jesus was insistent, he told the disciples that Lazarus was sleeping and he was going to wake him up. The disciples thought Jesus was

talking about natural sleep, so they said, "If he is sleeping, there's no need to go, he will wake up on his own." Jesus, then told them that Lazarus was really dead.

When Jesus was a short distance outside of Bethany, Martha, one of the sisters of Lazarus, met him. She told Jesus that if he had come when he was sent for her brother would not have died. She said, "But I know whatever you ask of God he will do." Jesus told her, her brother would rise and live again. Martha told Jesus she knew her brother would rise at the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and life and if a man has faith in me, even if he dies, he shall come back to life." Jesus then asked Martha, "Do you believe me?" Martha's answer was, "Yes I believe. You are the Messiah."

Now this is the point where today's Gospel begins. Jesus arrives at the house and finds Mary and her companions heavily weeping and grieving.

Mary fell at the feet of Jesus and she too, told Jesus if he had been there her brother would not have died. Jesus sighed heavily and he too began to weep. He asked Mary where had they laid him? They led him to the cave where Lazarus had been buried. Some of the people noticed that he was weeping and they thought Jesus had really loved Lazarus. They knew Jesus had healed the blind man, Bartimaeus, and they thought, if he had come to Bethany, when first sent for, Lazarus would not have died.

Jesus still weeping when he had come to the tomb said, "Take the stone away." Martha protested and said, "Lord he has been dead for four days, there will be a stench. His body is beginning to corrupt/deteriorate." Jesus

said to Martha, “Didn’t I tell you if you believed in me, you would see the glory of God”

So, when they took away the stone, Jesus looked up and called to God saying, “I thank you for always hearing me. I knew you would, but I called on you so that the people around me might believe that you sent me.”

Jesus then called in a loud voice, “Lazarus come out!” Lazarus got up still wrapped in the burial cloth and came out of the tomb. Jesus said “Unwrap him and let him go.”

Anyone who has lost someone to death knew how Jesus felt when he arrived at the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. The pain of lost moved him to weep heavily as he saw how the sisters grieved for their brother. He knew that he could give life to Lazarus, but for a moment he was incarnate, a human and he felt that emotion of lost generated by a love of his friend Lazarus.

Unlike Jesus, we can’t bring our loved one back to life. We are told and we say, they live on in our hearts and minds. Regardless of how long a loved one has been dead, thinking about them can still cause us to tear up and at times even to weep aloud.

Like Jesus, we call on God and give thanks, thanks that we had the loved one in our lives, thanks that we shared the time together, thanks that we were best friends, thanks that we shared experience of raising children together and thanks that we could call on God at any time.

Today after this sermon, we, the people of St. Matthew’s/San Mateo will honor the memory of our loved one who have died. I shall share this prayer with them:

Jesus, dear Saviour,  
on this day we prayerfully remember  
all our loved one who have died.  
Please give them comfort and hope  
and may they be at peace,  
knowing that they will  
rest in God's arms eternally.

Thank you for our memories of them  
and for the good times we shared.

We ask You, please,  
through their intercession,  
to deepen our faith,  
strengthen our hope  
and increase our love  
that we, too, may someday  
stand before You,  
ready to enter Your  
Holy Kingdom.

Amen.

Rev. Lionel Starke

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