

Year A 5th Sunday of Lent Homily Outline

“I am the resurrection and the life” John 11:25

Jesus calls us from death to life – abundant life

1. Jesus is not afraid of death

“RABBI, THE JEWS WERE JUST TRYING TO STONE YOU, AND YOU WANT TO GO BACK THERE?”

John 10:17-18

FOR THIS REASON THE FATHER LOVES ME, BECAUSE I LAY DOWN MY LIFE, THAT I MAY TAKE IT AGAIN. ¹⁸NO ONE TAKES IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MY OWN ACCORD. I HAVE POWER TO LAY IT DOWN, AND I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN.

The Lord is not afraid of death, and to the one who shares His life, He shares His courage. Father Alfons Wachsmann who was a Catholic priest in Germany when Hitler came to power. From prison he wrote to his sister:

“Sometimes I feel myself getting weary like one who cannot go on. Then God helps with his grace... My life lies in God's hands. My existence is sheltered in the grace of him who was put to death on the cross. The pattern of my life consists in hoping for God's mercy and faithfulness.”

On February 21, 1944 he was executed – before his death he wrote to his sister:

Dear Minka: At three o'clock I am going to die. Now the hour has come that God in his eternal love has ordained for me. Father Scholz, that good man, has heard my confession and given me the Viaticum. In one hour, I shall pass over into the glory of the living God. I have given myself over wholly, completely, and without reservation to God. In his hand I am sheltered. In his holy Heart, Christ will carry me up to the Father. Mary will protect me, and Saint Joseph will accompany me.

...God will care for you. Do not lose courage. Trust in God. He has not forsaken me. The eight months of my preparation for eternity have been difficult, yet very beautiful. Now I must go home through the narrow gate of the guillotine. I am convinced that Mother and Father are waiting for me.

Philippians 1:21

FOR TO ME LIFE IS CHRIST, AND DEATH IS GAIN

2. Jesus pronounces death as “sleep”.

“OUR FRIEND LAZARUS IS ASLEEP, BUT I AM GOING TO AWAKEN HIM.”

“THE GIRL IS NOT DEAD BUT SLEEPING.”

Mark 5:22-43

ONE OF THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICIALS, NAMED JAIRUS, CAME FORWARD. SEEING HIM HE FELL AT HIS FEET AND PLEADED EARNESTLY WITH HIM, SAYING, “MY DAUGHTER IS AT THE POINT OF DEATH. PLEASE, COME LAY YOUR HANDS ON HER THAT SHE MAY GET WELL AND LIVE.”

While they are on their way,

PEOPLE FROM THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICIAL’S HOUSE ARRIVED AND SAID, “YOUR DAUGHTER HAS DIED; WHY TROUBLE THE TEACHER ANY LONGER?” DISREGARDING THE MESSAGE THAT WAS REPORTED, JESUS SAID TO THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICIAL, “DO NOT BE AFRAID; JUST HAVE FAITH.”

WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE HOUSE OF THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICIAL, HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF A COMMOTION, PEOPLE WEeping AND WAILING LOUDLY. SO HE WENT IN AND SAID TO THEM, “WHY THIS COMMOTION AND WEeping? THE CHILD IS NOT DEAD BUT ASLEEP.”

3. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life

This is the central truth of the Gospel we hear today: He is Life and he has come to give us life.

“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME, EVEN IF HE DIES, WILL LIVE, AND EVERYONE WHO LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER DIE. DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?”

“Death is ever present in the inauthenticity, closedness and emptiness of our everyday life...Death is present as the nothingness of an empty existence which ends up in a mere semblance of living.” Eschatology. Ratzinger p. 95

4. Jesus has power over death

HE CRIED OUT IN A LOUD VOICE, “LAZARUS, COME OUT!” THE DEAD MAN CAME OUT,

Conclusion