*….and I’ll tell you about resurrection and life.*

Lent V. Series A.

03/26/2023

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

Rev. Sergio Rodriguez

*Jesus assured Martha:*

*I am death’s undoing, and life in its fullness.*

*You, and all like you, shall not taste the sting of death,*

*For out of you, life shall sprout forth, ensnaring the grave itself.*

*Do you see how I see?*

 *The meaning of the Gospel rests upon Jesus’ words to Martha, which I have faithfully exposited its contemporary meaning. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not simply about life, life apart from physical death. The Gospel of Christ concerns the* ***quality of life* we have in God.** We do not limit resurrection just to the body but know it is the power of God to undo and to release; from the sting of death, the snares of evil, the inward gaze of sin*.* Christ himself does not limit life and resurrection simply to freedom from the grave. A chapter earlier, as he speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd he says, “I came that you might have life **and have it abundantly** (Jn 10:10).” In other words, the entire of the gospel rests upon a life, in its fullest, holistic sense. All that I am and all that I have in God, with you, within myself.

 During these past five weeks, in our Sunday Forum classes, we have described the fuller sense of the Gospel, the fuller sense of Christ’s life, in this way: through the table. Life for us begins and ends at the table (Lent 1), with saints before us (Lent 2) and all of God’s children gathered around (Lent 3), feeding on God’s life in Christ (Lent 4), and sharing this meal to all according their need (Lent 5). For the Gospel of Jesus Christ is Life abundant; for the poor and the oppressed, and all mired in wounds, known and unknown, visible and hidden. Oscar Romero, whose ministry, and life is Gospel, said it best:

 *“With Christ's light let us illuminate even the most hideous caverns of the human person: torture, jail, plunder, want, chronic illness. The oppressed must be saved, not with a revolutionary salvation, in mere human fashion, but with the holy revolution of the Son of Man, who dies on the cross to cleanse God's image, which is soiled in today's humanity, a humanity so enslaved, so selfish, so sinful.”*

 I would add, that you have seen this light and hear its voice. You have experienced the waters of his life-saving tears and seen many Lazarus raised from the dead. Perhaps you are one of them too. Every time I come to this congregation, I take the opportunity to look at the bulletin board right by the elevator in the parish hall. There are letters thanking you for walking along side not only Lazarus, but Mary’s and Marthas too. In our Sunday Forum, there will be leaders from among you who will not just tell you about service and care but show you the Gospel of Life. To that end, I have invited, Mr. Mr. Robert Rivera, the director of the St. James Family Life Center to speak to you about the very Life in which you stand here today.

**Thank you for the invitation to speak today about the St James Family Life Center. On Saturday, April 29, 2023 at 6 pm St James Family Life Center have its 10th Anniversary.**

**Over the ten years, we have assisted 1000’s of families with food, utility assistance, and rental payments. We have sponsored over 30 Immigration Forums assisting New Arrivals with legal assistance, resources, and support. We have worked diligently with Houston ISD and Pasadena ISD in helping families develop the skills necessary to get their children on the Path to College and Careers. We have contacted numerous outreach efforts in apartments helping families get connected to resources and support. We have done countless ESL classes, Citizenship classes, and financial workshops. Annually, we have sponsored Camp Hope and have watched our children grow in faith and mature as young leaders.**

**We are most proud of your support and partnership in helping us accomplish all that we do. I am reminded of a story my daughter in law who is a school teacher told me. She had a student who was a little terror in the classroom. Every couple of days she had to call his parents to complain of his behavior. But one week, the young man was an angel. Rebekah decided to give the parents the good news. As it would happen, the student answered. Rebekah said to him, let me speak to your mom. The student ran off to get his mom. In the background Rebekah heard the mom scolding the young man. The mom then said I am not going to talk to her. The young man ran back to the phone and said “Beep, at the sound of the tone please leave a message.”**

**You may ask what does this have to do with Christ the King. You have never turned down our call for assistance and we call frequently. This past month we asked for help with a family that had 2 children sexually assaulted. You helped provide emergency cash assistance to get the family stabilized. On another occasion, we had a 6 year-old that had spinal bifida who had just arrived to this country. We worked to get him settled in school but he couldn’t walk. We needed a wheel chair to help him navigate to school. Again, you stepped in and helped provide the resources to get the wheelchair. We have countless stories of individual members of this congregation engaging in our projects. You have never turned down our call and for that we are grateful. I know the families we serve appreciate your generosity and support. Please join us on April 29th as we celebrate our 10 years and recognize your contributions. Thank you.**