

Day Nine

Saturday in Lent 5

4 April 2020

Readings: Ezekiel 37: 21b-28, Psalm 121, Gospel reading: John 11: 45-57

Good morning dear friends in Christ

Before our period of isolation in South Africa, a priest in Canada, named Reverend James D Spencer had quite an amazing sermon on the fourth Sunday in Lent. What was most gripping apart from the fact that I befriended Reverend Spencer on my trip to England, is the fact he dumbfounded me with his opening statement of his sermon quoting a saying, “May you live in interesting times.”

He uses this statement to emphasize our current world crises, on the things of old and also focuses on the meaning of these interesting times. His conclusion of the then Gospel text according to **John 9 verse 1-41**, “What good can we do in our time of isolation?” particularly based on Jesus and the good that He had done for the man born blind.

The fifth Sunday in Lent, Jesus continues to do good. He raises Lazarus to life before His own death on the cross. And as in Father Jerome’s reflection on the fifth Sunday in Lent, “*the closer we move to Jesus, the more we rise from the pit*”, the closer we move to Jesus, the more we want to rise from the pit and not only rise from it but become transformed by it.

In our Gospel text today because of His good deeds by raising Lazarus from the dead, many Jews came to believe in Him, while others sought to kill Him. Jesus’ good works drives Him into a period of isolation or as some biblical scholars would say a wilderness retreat. Perhaps similar to what we are experiencing at this point. Though we are not in isolation because of our good deeds that have caused controversy, yet we are in isolation nonetheless.

It is what Jesus does after this wilderness retreat that most astonishes us. He continues with the good works and He implements it amongst His own when He washed the feet of His disciples in **John 13: 3-14**. It does not matter what our circumstances are, if we are transformed by rising from the pit as Lazarus was and if we believe like some of the Jews did, we are compelled to do good in every situation and more so when we are living in interesting times.

“In Christ alone my hope is found

He is my light, my strength, my song

This cornerstone, this solid ground,

Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace,

When fears are stilled, when strivings cease,

My comforter, my all in all

Here in the love of Christ, I stand.”

Keith Getty/ Stuart Townend

As we bow our heads in prayer, together we pray:

May the Lord bless us and watch over us

Mat the Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us

May the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen

APB, 1989; 53