

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

This is the prologue to the Gospel of John. It was added after the Gospel itself was written and there are numerous interesting things that Scripture Scholars have written about this famous passage of Scripture. The one issue that is important for us today is that this passage is an account of creation written in the first century. Unlike the Old Testament accounts of God's creative work it is passage is written by those who know the Risen Lord and have been given to understand creation from the perspective of Easter Day.

Easter Day, the day of Resurrection, the day which places all that had been before and all that will come into a new light, the light of the Resurrection. That light, cast away not only the darkness of sin, but of ignorance and doubt. We no longer rely upon the creation myths of the other ancient Near East peoples to understand the nature of God and His loving act of Creation. Now in the light of the Resurrection we are able to perceive clearly the role of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost in the nature of the Created Order.

All well and good you may say, but has this to do with the Gospel for this Sunday?

The events recorded about the widow of Nain and her son..... Everything! Let us spend a few moments considering the recorded miracles when Jesus raised someone from the dead.

The first is the daughter of Jairus. In this passage the trip to the house is interrupted by the healing a woman with a hemorrhage of blood. Any sense of concern, any desire to hurry is totally absent. Jesus will do this healing and then he will proceed. It is as if raising the dead is the simplest thing in the world. We must compare the action of this reality to what we have seen of resuscitation in the hospitals today were everything is a rush and all must be done with haste and in the proper order.

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Ja'irus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and besought him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well." And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Tal'itha cu'mi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Mark 5:21-43

Now let's consider a friend of Jesus. Lazarus is very sick, Martha and Mary have asked Jesus to come and heal him, but Jesus again was in no hurry. Lazarus not only dies, but is buried and has been in dead four days. The body has begun to decompose and they warn Jesus there will be an odor. Jesus goes to the tomb and orders the stone rolled away.

We read in the Gospel of John:

And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

John 11:41b – 44

Both of these passages are so very similar to the passage we read today, not only because someone is returned to life in this place and time, but because of the apparent ease at which Jesus is able to accomplish this miracle. There is no spitting on the ground and rubbing of mud into eyes. He does not place his fingers in their ears, or touch their tongues. He does not tell

them to go and show themselves to the priests. None of those actions that are recorded with other healing miracles, none are necessary for us to understand the miracle. Now we are to understand that Jesus and Jesus alone is the Lord of Life.

It is He through whom all things came into being and without was not anything made that was made, we read in John's Gospel. It is He who the first born of the dead, through whom we have the promise of eternal life. Death for us looks like an end and it is the end of our life in this time and place, but it is not the end of life for those who believe. They live with Him and in Him they have life forever.

This is the promise of Easter Day. It is the final revelation of God's Love for us and for all that He created. It is the reuniting of heaven and earth. Death we are told no longer has dominion over us, we are saved and set free. What we witness in the miracles of Jesus is a glimpse into the reality of that life where there is no death, no pain or suffering, but light and life eternal.

"Little girl, I say to you, arise."

"Young man, I say to you arise".....

"Lazarus, come out"....

And so the Lord called to them. And they came forth from what we understand as death and reanimated they continued their life in this place and time. These miracles were to direct our attention to the even greater miracle and gift that is to come for each of us.

One day we will die to this world, we will fall asleep peacefully in Christ, and then He will call to us...Arise..... Get up.....Come out....

He will call us not to the old life but to the new and eternal life with Him.

This is the faith we profess in the Creeds,

This is the faith of the Church,

This is the promise of God.

Amen