

Holy Scripture often speaks in such a way that, while recounting events long past, it reveals the condition of our souls in the present. And so today, when we hear of the raising of Lazarus, we are told both of a miracle once worked in Bethany, and of a mystery continually at work within us.

For who is Lazarus, if not the soul grown weary? Who is he, laid in the tomb, if not the person who feels overcome – by hard work, by discouragement, or illness? And who are we, standing outside the tomb, if not those who sometimes feel that life within us has grown faint?

The psalm speaks to the weary soul at the end of term as it begins: *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.* Yet even from the depths our voice rises. For the soul, though burdened, is not silent; and to cry out is already to turn toward life.

But what can the soul do, buried as it is? Hear the promise of the loving God: *I will open your graves... I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live.* Consider the Lord at the tomb. He delays, that faith may be tested; He weeps, that love may be shown; He calls, that life may be restored. For it is written: *Jesus wept.* * He who could raise the dead first chooses to share in human sorrow, that we might know that no weakness of ours is hidden from Him.

And when Jesus cries out with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come out:* He calls him by name. For if He had not named Lazarus, all the dead would have risen. Such is the power of His voice. Yet in naming him, He shows His care for each individual soul. So too He calls you, personally. He sees where you are weary. He wants to free you when you feel bound.

Lazarus is called to new life. Lazarus comes forth from his grave, but still bound hand and foot. He is alive, but not yet completely free. * And the Lord says to those standing by: *Unbind him, and let him go.* What does this teach us? That while God alone gives life, we are also called to help one another toward freedom. And it teaches this also: that though the soul is raised, it may still carry the habits of death. Weariness, doubt, fear – these do not vanish at once. They must be loosened, patiently, over time.

And we may ask, from our weary station: is there an extent to which it could be said that we owe it to ourselves not to remain bound, once we have been called to life? * Therefore, let no

one be troubled if, though called by Christ, you still feel constrained. Let no one despair if, though alive, he does not yet feel fully free. The work of God is sure, but it is also gradual.

And what of the Spirit of which St Paul speaks? *The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.* Consider the greatness of this gift. That power which opened the tomb is not far off; it has made its dwelling within you. Even when you feel least alive, there remains within you a life that is not your own, yet sustains you.

Dear brothers and sisters, remember that when the body grows tired or the mind becomes burdened, the work of God continues. Listen to his voice and respond: if you are in the depths, cry out; if you are mourning at the tomb, listen; if you hear him call, arise. For he who said, *I am the resurrection and the life*, does not speak of a distant future, but of a present reality. Even now he restores and gives life. And if your strength is small, do not be troubled. It is enough that you have heard his voice. For the Lord who calls does not abandon his work. He gives life, and he brings it to completion.