

HOMILY

The Fifth Sunday of Lent *March 9, 2008*

Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski
St. John the Evangelist Parish
Davison, Michigan

Did you know that the name Lazarus means “helpless”? In that sense, we are all Lazaruses. Today’s Gospel reminds us that without Jesus we stand alone in the face of a terrible foe.

What a personal, truly moving story. After being in the tomb four days, Jesus calls Lazarus by name. Jesus says, “*Lazarus, come out!*” At Jesus’ command, Lazarus, who was dead, came forth from death and out of his tomb to live again. Then to those who were present Jesus said, “*Untie him and let him go free.*”

The story of Lazarus can be our story. We, too, can be untied, turned loose. Like Lazarus, Jesus calls us by name and says:

- ◇ Come out from sin and selfishness to know healing and wholeness.
- ◇ Come out from hopelessness to a renewed trust in God.
- ◇ Come out from pride and self-importance to stand in truth before God and others.
- ◇ Come out, says Jesus, from your tomb of excessive busyness. Take time to think, to listen, to be quiet, to pray!
- ◇ Come out, says Jesus, from the thick-walled tomb of needless worry. Be free of the shackles of undue anxiety and entrust yourself to the care of a loving God.
- ◇ Come out, says Jesus, from under the pile of unfounded fears that have become a virtual burial place. Untie yourself from all unnecessary concerns and find new courage and freedom in me.

- ◇ Come out, says Jesus, from the sepulcher of sin. Be untied of guilt and shame and know, in me, the freedom of forgiveness.
- ◇ Come out from indifference and lukewarmedness and live by faith.

Yes, the story of Lazarus is our story. This can be the beginning of a new life.

Some of you will remember the story of a nurse who, before listening to the heartbeats of children, would put the stethoscope into their ears and let them listen to their own hearts. One day, she tucked the stethoscope into the ears of a four-year-old; then she placed the disk over his heart. “Listen,” she said, “what do you suppose that is?” Thump...thump...thump...He drew his eyebrows together in a puzzled line and looked up as if lost in the mystery of the strange tap-tap-tapping in his chest. Then his face broke out in a wondrous grim. “Is that Jesus knocking?” he asked.

Well, maybe so. Maybe Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart this day. Maybe Jesus is ordering the door rolled away from your tomb. *“Lazarus, come out!”*

The story of the raising of Lazarus ends with these words:

“This caused many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did, to put their faith in him.”

How about you? Have you really put your faith in him? Do you trust him? Are you willing to turn your life over to his guidance, his direction?

“Lazarus, come out!”