

Saturday of Sixth Week of Great Lent

The Rising of Lazarus - John 11:55-12:11

Blind Guides (Regnum Christi Meditation for Monday of Holy Week by Father James Swanson, LC John 12:1-11 [Audio Version*](#))

John 11:55-12:11

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before Passover to purify themselves. They looked for Jesus and said to one another as they were in the temple area, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?" For the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should inform them, so that they might arrest him. Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then Judas the Iscariot, one (of) his disciples, and the one who would betray him, said, "Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages and given to the poor?" He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions. So Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." (The) large crowd of the Jews found out that he was there and came, not only because of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, I wish to accompany you closely on the road to Calvary. If I were to contemplate you more often as you hang scourged and bloody upon the cross, I'm certain I would be able to rest in your love and base my actions on that one truth. I know that you have loved me with an eternal love: you have proven it there on the wood of the cross. So, I long to respond with gratitude, peace and the firm determination to spread your love to everyone.

Petition: Lord, grant me faith in your promise to raise everyone from the dead.

1. A Willful Blindness: Jesus produces one of his most convincing miracles – a sure sign that God sent him: He raises someone from the dead. The chief priests cannot deny this. The deed was not done far away in Galilee. Jesus is right there, in Bethany, just outside Jerusalem.

Lazarus is there too. Anyone who wants to see can travel the short distance from Jerusalem, over the Mount of Olives, and visit with Jesus and Lazarus. The chief priests, rather than give in and accept Jesus as the Messiah, reject him. Their rejection is complete. They should be able to see that Jesus' miracle is obviously an act of God's divine power, but they refuse to accept it. They can think of no way to convince people that he is not the Messiah except to kill both Jesus and Lazarus. Sometimes mere association with Jesus can bring about costly consequences. How ironic it would have been to be killed for the "crime" of being raised from the dead...

2. Harden Not Your Hearts: Logically, if anyone is to accept Jesus as Messiah, it should be the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees. They are the ones who know Scripture the best. They are the ones who are supposed to be on the lookout for the Messiah. By now they should realize that Jesus is doing everything that the Messiah is supposed to do. Yet with only a few exceptions (Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea), they fail to acknowledge him as Messiah. God's ways are not our ways. God's plans and actions remain impenetrable to the rationalistic mind that demands scientific-like proofs even in the spiritual realm. Hardness of heart makes us see the good works of others as evil. Do I seek to attune my mind and my heart to God's ways or do I demand reasons from him? Often times the cross in our lives does not make sense. However, we will one day understand it by first accepting and carrying it.

3. Pride and Envy Can be Our Downfall: The Pharisees' problem is pride. They think they've got everything figured out. They think (because they don't want it to be true) that Jesus cannot be the Messiah. He doesn't fulfill their expectations and they are not prepared to change – to examine themselves to see if they might be wrong. They are so sure they have it all figured out that they overlook all that Jesus does to fulfill Scripture. They go even so far as to overlook his having raised Lazarus from the dead! They clutch at any feeble excuse to discredit him: "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him" (Luke 7:39); "Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee" (John 7:52). God doesn't conform himself to our plans and ideas. He expects us to conform to his.

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, faith comes so hard to me. I should be aware of all the good you have worked in my life. Help me to look with the eyes of faith that will bring me to an unshakeable belief in you, a faith like that of those who witnessed your raising of Lazarus.

Resolution: Today, I will look back briefly on my life and try to notice all the things Christ has done for me, so that by reflecting on these things my faith and trust in him will deepen.

**The Gospel read in the Maronite Church on the Saturday of the sixth week of Great Lent is John 11:55-12:11 while the Audio version and the meditation above covers John 12:1-11*