



# 5th Sunday of Lent

Jn 11:1-45

Everyday, we hear the news about the coronavirus pandemic, also known as COVID19, and it left us with fear and frustration. We want to do whatever is possible, but we do not know exactly how. As much as possible, we want to go back to the routine of a normal life, but the fact of the matter is, it's impossible. In times like this, we want to live with confidence in God, but the reality of the fear of death is much stronger. Most of the time, we are

left with insufficient answers from the medical perspectives and those in the governments. Then out of frustrations we ask: "Is God with us?"

That must have been the question of Martha and Mary when their brother Lazarus died. In fact, both Martha and Mary said to Jesus: "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died."

Like Martha and Mary, during this difficult time many of us might have asked ourselves this question: "Is God with us?"

Not too long ago a young woman came to me and asked, "father, what will happen to those who died unexpectedly, those who have no time to prepare?"

To be honest with you, i was caught off guard by her question. I didn't know what to tell her, knowing that not too long ago, she lost nine (9) members of her family in the Philippine government's war on drugs.

If you were in my shoes, how would you respond?

If someone ask you questions like:

What will happen to those who lost their lives unexpectedly in random shooting? What will happen to those who died unexpectedly due to coronavirus pandemic? What will happen to those who were not able to receive the sacraments because of cancellation of public masses and other sacraments?

How about those people who lost their lives in the recent earthquake in Croatia?

What will happened to those who lost their lives after being caught in the crossfire in the seemingly never ending civil war in Syria and Iraq?

The list goes on and on. But are there right answers to these questions?

Maybe?

Today's gospel tells us: "whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Maybe, we ought to ask ourselves this simple yet profound question: "Do we truly believe that even if we die; we will live eternally with Christ?"

My dear friends, belief is the beginning of faith. Therefore, we have to believe in the person of Jesus, believe that he will never leave us alone, believe that God is the God of mercy and compassion, believe that he rose triumphant from the dead, believe we can forgive those who have wronged us in any way, believe that we can find joy after a tremendous pain---most of all believe that there is resurrection after the crucifixion.

That's why, do not simply say: "yes Lord, I believe." Rather find ways to make those words alive in your day to day life. Find ways, to put skin in your faith.

Perhaps, it is an understatement to say that this is a very difficult time for all of us. It is hard not to be able to seek comfort in the church through the sacraments, because of the cancellation of public masses and other sacraments due to a very obvious reason, the coronavirus pandemic. But never forget that the sun always shines after a storm. In just the same way, I believe that something good will come out after this ordeal. Always remember that in the midst of this trial we are in, we are deeply loved and protected by God.

Stay safe and healthy. God bless.