

A Homily  
Lent 5  
April 9-10, 2011  
Focus on John 11:1-45

You've probably heard the saying that sometimes people don't see the forest because the trees are in the way. Yes, it is possible to focus on so many things that what is most obvious somehow eludes us.

Maybe that's the case with today's Gospel. We tend to think of it as a story about Lazarus.

And maybe that's the case with last Sunday's Gospel. We tend to think of it as a story about a man born blind.

If we think back to the Gospel of two weeks ago, perhaps we tend to think about it as a story about a woman from Samaria at Jacob's well.

Perhaps everyone is aware that today's Gospel, last Sunday's Gospel, and the Gospel read two weeks ago were rather long stories.

But what is most obvious about these Gospels? Were they merely stories about Lazarus being raised, about a man who was born blind, about a woman from Samaria at Jacob's well?

What is most obvious may have somehow eluded us. **These stories are mainly stories about who Jesus is and what Jesus does.**

That Gospel proclaimed two weeks ago was really all about Jesus. In the story, the Lord Himself said that He gives the kind of water that brings total and lasting refreshment to those seeking the gift of faith.

With Palm Sunday merely coming next weekend, have we asked Jesus to refresh our souls and fill us with the kind of refreshment no person and no thing can fill us?

The Gospel proclaimed last weekend was also really all about Jesus. In the story, Jesus gave sight to the man born blind and reminded us that He is the Light of the World.

With Palm Sunday coming next weekend, have we looked to Jesus to be our Light in a world that is too often filled with the darkness of evil, broken relationships, and falsehood?

Today's Gospel is also really all about Jesus. It teaches us about the kind of God we tend to want and the kind of God we really have.

We tend to want a God who will cut our losses and cushion our failures, a God who will grant us a life free from pain, one who will rescue us from death by making sure we never have to die. Simply consider the kinds of things the people in today's Gospel were saying to Jesus on the occasion of Lazarus' death and this becomes so very clear.

In reality, we have a God who creates life in the midst of grief, one who creates love in the midst of loss, and creates faith in the midst of despair.

Jesus tells us that He is the Resurrection and the Life. And as He asked Martha in today's Gospel, He asks us if we believe this.

He show us by His own example that the road to Easter runs directly through all the events we're going to hear about beginning on Palm Sunday, and taking us through Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

There are still so many opportunities to draw closer to the Lord, no matter what your Lent has been or has not been thus far.

May the remainder of this Lenten Season find us lifting our hearts to Him, sharing our pain with Him, placing our faith in Him; may we be transformed by His constant presence.

May we know that His love never fails in the very midst of the big and small "deaths" we encounter in our everyday journeys.