

## **A Message from Fr. Leandro "Lines" Dela Cruz**



**While we do not have any single candidate for the RCIA this year, I'd like to reflect on the optional Year A Gospel Reading given us this 5th Sunday of Lent as it speaks of a reality that all of us can relate to. I'll preach on the Year B Gospel (Jn 12: 20-33) tomorrow at all my Masses.**

**This Sunday's Gospel (Jn 11:1-45 or the short form can be used) confronts us with a truth as old as humanity itself: death. Lazarus, Jesus' friend, lies in the tomb. Martha and Mary, his sisters, are filled with grief, a grief we all know too well. We have all felt the sting of loss, the hollowness that comes with the absence of a loved one.**

**Death is a mystery, a thief that steals life away. It can feel like an insurmountable wall, a finality that chills us to the bone. The Gospel offers a powerful counterpoint to this fear: the raising of Lazarus.**

**Jesus, moved with compassion for his friends, arrives at Bethany. He weeps with them, showing us that God himself is not untouched by our suffering. Then, with a voice that commands even death, Jesus calls Lazarus forth. The tomb is opened,**

the grave clothes unwound, and Lazarus walks out – a living testament to Christ's power over death.

This miracle is not just a historical event. It is a promise for us. Jesus proclaims, "I am the resurrection and the life." He doesn't just offer vague hope; He is the embodiment of hope. He conquered death itself, paving the way for our own resurrection.

This doesn't erase the pain of loss in the here and now. But it does change everything. Death is not the end. It is a transformation, a passage to a new life in God's presence. For those who believe, death holds no more fear.

However, the raising of Lazarus is also a call to action. We are not simply waiting for a future resurrection. Jesus calls us to live a life transformed by His love. He calls us to turn away from sin, the true death of the soul. He calls us to embrace a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life that reflects the light of Christ in the world.

Brothers and Sisters, let us not be afraid. Death may come, but Christ has conquered it. Let us live with faith in His promise, and let us share that hope with the world. May we draw strength from the raising of Lazarus, knowing that in Christ, there is life beyond the tomb.

God Loves You.