

**John 11.1-46**

Now a certain man was ill, Laz'arus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'arus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it."

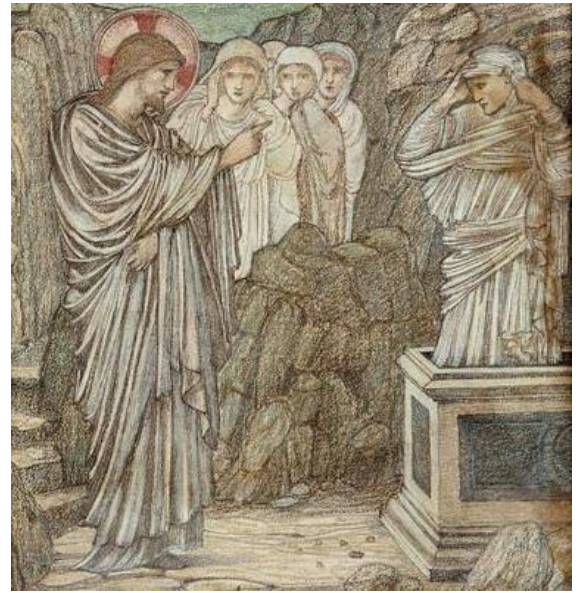
5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Laz'arus. 6 So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11 Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Laz'arus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." 12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Laz'arus is dead; 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Laz'arus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; 34 and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me." 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Laz'arus, come out." 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him; 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.



## John 1.1,2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God; 3 all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

## Benedict XVI

In today's Gospel – the raising of Lazarus – we listen to the voice of faith from the lips of Martha, Lazarus' sister. Jesus said to her: "Your brother will rise again," and she replies: "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (Jn 11:23-24). But Jesus repeats: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (Jn 11:25-26). This is the true newness which abounds and exceeds every border! Christ pulls down the wall of death and in him dwells all the fullness of God, who is life, eternal life. Therefore death did not have power over him and the raising of Lazarus is a sign of his full dominion over physical death which, before God, resembles sleep (cf. Jn 11:11).

However there is another death, which cost Christ the hardest struggle, even the price of the Cross: it is spiritual death and sin which threaten to ruin the existence of every human being. To overcome this death, Christ died and his Resurrection is not a return to past life, but an opening to a new reality, a "new land" united at last with God's Heaven. Therefore St Paul writes: "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).



## Leon Podles

Even in revelation, God is still a hidden God. He works miracles, but we cannot command him to do so, or even predict when he will work them. Nor does he do them in sufficient number or power to convince the skeptical. Even when he does them, they sometimes harden the hearts of God's enemies against him. Jesus' raising of Lazarus did not convince his enemies that he was the Messiah. It convinced them that he must die.

## Mark Buchanan

But Jesus wept. That one line, John 11:35, is the shortest verse in the Bible. Jesus weeps at the tomb of Lazarus, his friend, the one he loves. And, in truth, never has so much theology been so cleanly distilled as here. Never have such riches been rendered with such economy. The fullness of the Incarnation, Christ's coming among us—to be with us, to be one with us—is gathered up and pressed into a single subject and verb.

The starkness of it contains a cosmic pageantry; the sparseness of it holds a theological galaxy. Here is love, mercy, passion, compassion, grief, and anger over our condition, our frailty, our vulnerability, chiseled down to two words: Jesus wept.

## John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*

Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, all the dramatic events of the last day envisioned by Jewish apocalyptic – resurrection from the dead, eternal life in heaven – have collapsed into the present moment and into the person who dares to say simply "I am." In effect, Jesus says to Martha, "Martha, the resurrection you are looking for is looking at you."

## St. Augustine

The sinner is dead, especially he whom the load of sinful habit presses down, who is buried as it were like Lazarus. For he was not merely dead, he was buried also. Whosoever then is oppressed by the load of evil habit, of a wicked life, of earthly lusts, I mean, so that that in his case is true which is piteously described in a certain Psalm, "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God," he is such an one, of whom it is said, "Confession perishes from the dead, as from one that is not." And who shall raise him up, but He who when the stone was removed, cried out, and said, "Lazarus, Come forth!" Now what is to "come forth," but to bring forth what was hidden? He then who confesses "comes forth." "Come forth" he could not were

he not alive; he could not be alive, had he not been raised again. And therefore in confession the accusing of one's self, is the praise of God.

### George Rutler

At first, the refusal to rejoice in these great signs seems as remarkable as the signs themselves, but it is typical of a cramped view of the world, by which close-minded people deny reality. When Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb, "many believed in Him," but others rushed to the Pharisees, who feared that the Romans would react violently. The miracle was evident, but the desire for social and political control took precedence. This miracle was the efficient cause for the start of the Passion.

Thus, we see the flaw in the adage that "seeing is believing." It is possible for human pride to refuse to believe what it sees. Of course, one must guard against illusions that trick human vision, but there is a willfulness in obtuse people that rejects palpable evidence. Having received the report about Lazarus, the Pharisees reacted like Sergeant Frank Drebin, the character in the "Naked Gun" film series: "Nothing to see here! Please disperse."

That kind of vaunting of ideology over truth would focus on the sins and failings of Christians to be Christians, rather than acknowledge the saints and miracles of Christ in history.

### William Temple

The motive of these Chief Priests is less religious than political. The raising of Lazarus is an event so stupendous that they expect the crowd to put the Lord at the head of a Messianic revolt, and expect him to accept that part to play. They do not know that he has already refused it (6.15); what they do know is that imperial Rome has shown no patience towards native governments that cannot suppress revolutionary risings. They stand to lose their Holy Place and their national existence. Better than this, let *one man die for the people...*

Caiaphas was consciously uttering a piece of cynical utilitarianism. Unconsciously he was summarizing the Gospel.

