

Each one of us has a unique life composed of unique relationships. We all have a unique blend of gifts, virtues and vices; we have our peculiar personalities, sense of humor, character, way of doing things. We all have our own little worlds – we have “a life.” In today’s Gospel, Jesus claims to possess more than an ordinary life, he makes the astonishing assertion: “I am the resurrection and THE LIFE!” What does this mean? We have all been given the gift of life but Jesus IS Life! His life is eternal, it is not given him by another, furthermore, he has power over life and death! In a nutshell, Jesus is declaring his divinity. He then proceeds to demonstrate the truth of his extravagant claim by raising Lazarus from the dead.

By raising Lazarus from the dead, in conjunction with his mysterious words, Jesus teaches us not only that he has authority over natural life, but furthermore, he has the power to give us life beyond the grave: supernatural life, eternal life! He says, “Whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” What a staggering statement!! But notice, Jesus places a qualification on those who would receive eternal life: they must believe in him. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? We read in our Catechism, faith is:

...both a gift of God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response, and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed. It is this revelation of God which the Church proposes for our belief, and which we profess in the Creed, celebrate in the sacraments, live by right conduct that fulfills the twofold commandment of charity (as specified in the Ten Commandments), and respond to in our prayer of faith. (CCC, Glossary: “Faith”; cf. CCC #142ff).

Clearly, to believe in Jesus involves mind and heart – love, loyalty, devotion and obedience to his teachings which he continues to make known through his Church.

Lazarus believed in Jesus. He is a perfect model of faith; how do we know this? When his sisters came to Jesus on his behalf, to tell Jesus he was sick, they didn’t even need to use his name, they said, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” Evidently, everyone knew Lazarus was loved by Jesus; he was Jesus’ dear friend. ***The question comes to mind, how about us? Can people recognize by our lives that we are devoted to Jesus? – that we love him, and he loves us?*** Faith is powerful! It gives us strength to endure every trial of life. St. Paul with living faith can say, “I consider that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared to the glory to be revealed in us.” Faith is stronger than death: “Whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

Lord, we believe; help our unbelief. In your mercy, grant us the gift of faith that we might come to the fullness of Life – the Life which is divine, eternal, victorious over death – the Life of Christ.

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples

