

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given April 10, 2011
Fifth Sunday of Lent - Liturgical Year A

What things at a house break and need to be fixed? The dryer, the dishwasher, the oil burner, the air conditioner, the transmission in the car, the computer...So, someone comes to the house or you bring it somewhere – to be fixed.

It seems like the Gospel today is a fix-it story. Lazarus was sick, and he died because Jesus was late in arriving. Jesus comes late, but he can still fix him – at least that's what Martha and Mary desire.

Jesus doesn't seem to agree. He didn't say, "I am the resurrector for Lazarus." Instead, he says to Martha and Mary, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He resurrects Lazarus to reveal that he is the Resurrection and the Life.

The experiences recounted in the Sacred Scripture today may seem remote to us – Adam and Eve in the Garden, Jesus in the desert. They seem to be not only distant from our life but opposite to each other, only linked by temptation.

In the second century, St. Irenaeus wrote, "The Glory of God is the human person fully alive." Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and his mission is for us to have abundant life through him. Lazarus died again sometime after the recounting of today's Gospel, but he died differently because Jesus had changed his life once before.

There was a day of prayer for a group of people yesterday, and one part of the day was to reenact the washing of the feet. A man told me about the experience of having his feet washed – he was self-conscious and hesitant as the priest washed his feet. But he also felt like Jesus was washing away all kinds of things from his whole life. This wasn't a pedicure but a cure – a changed life. The relationship between this man and Christ changed. The man became more fully alive and more fully connected to Jesus as his Way, his Truth, and his Life.

Lent is offering that change for those preparing for Baptism at Easter, and the Christian life is offering it to the rest of us, today and every day, over and over again.