

# Spiritual Exercises for the 5th Sunday of Lent

## A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany,  
the village of Mary and her sister Martha.  
Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with  
perfumed oil  
and dried his feet with her hair;  
it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.  
So the sisters sent word to him saying,  
“Master, the one you love is ill.”

When Jesus heard this he said,  
“This illness is not to end in death,  
but is for the glory of God,  
that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”  
Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

So when he heard that he was ill,  
he remained for two days in the place where he was.  
Then after this he said to his disciples,  
“Let us go back to Judea.”  
The disciples said to him,  
“Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you,  
and you want to go back there?”  
Jesus answered,  
“Are there not twelve hours in a day?  
If one walks during the day, he does not stumble,  
because he sees the light of this world.  
But if one walks at night, he stumbles,

*Imagine the people who are special to you. How do you feel when they are ill or in trouble?*

*Imagine that Jesus has a special love for you like Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. What would it feel like to be a beloved disciple of Jesus?*



because the light is not in him.”

He said this, and then told them,

“Our friend Lazarus is asleep,  
but I am going to awaken him.”

So the disciples said to him,

“Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved.”

But Jesus was talking about his death,  
while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep.

So then Jesus said to them clearly,

“Lazarus has died.

And I am glad for you that I was not there,  
that you may believe.

Let us go to him.”

So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples,

“Let us also go to die with him.”

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus  
had already been in the tomb for four days.

Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away.

And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary  
to comfort them about their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming,  
she went to meet him;

but Mary sat at home.

Martha said to Jesus,

“Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask of God,  
God will give you.”

Jesus said to her,  
“Your brother will rise.”  
Martha said to him,  
“I know he will rise,  
in the resurrection on the last day.”  
Jesus told her,  
“I am the resurrection and the life;  
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,  
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.  
Do you believe this?”  
She said to him, “Yes, Lord.  
I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God,  
the one who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this,  
she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying,  
“The teacher is here and is asking for you.”  
As soon as she heard this,  
she rose quickly and went to him.  
For Jesus had not yet come into the village,  
but was still where Martha had met him.  
So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting  
her  
saw Mary get up quickly and go out,  
they followed her,  
presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there.  
When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him,  
she fell at his feet and said to him,

*Next time you are in trouble  
or distress, try and make the  
words of Martha your own.  
Can you have such trust  
and devotion to Jesus in the  
midst of suffering?*

*Have you recently lost  
a loved one? Can you  
imagine yourself having  
this conversation with Jesus  
about them?*

“Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with  
her weeping,

he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said,

“Where have you laid him?”

They said to him, “Sir, come and see.”

And Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, “See how he loved him.”

But some of them said,

“Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man  
have done something so that this man would not have died?”

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb.

It was a cave, and a stone lay across it.

Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him,

“Lord, by now there will be a stench;  
he has been dead for four days.”

Jesus said to her,

“Did I not tell you that if you believe  
you will see the glory of God?”

So they took away the stone.

And Jesus raised his eyes and said,

“Father, I thank you for hearing me.

I know that you always hear me;

*Pause here with Jesus weeping. Imagine what it must have been like for the disciples to see Jesus weep. What emotions does it stir in you? If you want, write a description of the scene and try to connect with what you are experiencing when you imagine this scene.*

but because of the crowd here I have said this,  
that they may believe that you sent me.”

And when he had said this,

He cried out in a loud voice,

“Lazarus, come out!”

The dead man came out,

tied hand and foot with burial bands,

and his face was wrapped in a cloth.

So Jesus said to them,

“Untie him and let him go.”

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary  
and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

### **The Gospel of the Lord.**

1) What are your thoughts traps when you suffer? Do you ever say to yourself, “If I was a saint I would not feel this way” or “if I had greater faith I would not be so disturbed”? Take a moment to bring these negative ruminations to the Lord. Write out a meditation if that helps.

2) Imagine that perfection is not in an ideal but rather in the person of Jesus Christ. What would be a healthier perspective on the kind of saint you are called to be? Write a meditation if that helps.

*Do you believe that you will see the glory of God in this life and in the next? Remember the Beatitude, blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God. Do you believe that God will manifest his glory in your life?*

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Me \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Me \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Me \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Me \_\_\_\_\_