**“Power of God”**

All our readings today point us to the awesome power of God. It is God’s desire that we all come to know Him as our God who is all powerful, all loving, all merciful, and a forgiving God. After we have sinned, if we sincerely repentant of our sins, and make atonement for our sins, God is always ready to bring us back to Himself so we can share in His everlasting joy. All He asks us to do, is to believe in Him and He will do the rest.

In our first reading, through Prophet Ezekiel, God made a promise to the Jews that with His power, He would bring them from death and give them life. The Jews had turned their back on God so many times, and in His mercy, He had always forgiven them. That is why twice and with urgency in His words, God lamented at their stubbornness for not knowing and believing in Him. The urgency in His words **“O my People!”** was filled with love for the Jews and His desire for them to open their hearts to receive His love.

God told them to exercise patience because, He, fulfills His word. He told them to wait with Him and not to wait for Him. Because waiting for Him would lead to impatience, anxiety, worry, and frustration on their part. While waiting with Him would lead to joy and fulfillment when with His awesome power, He would deliver on His promise in His own time.

God delivers and never fails at His promises to those who love Him. He is all powerful and all merciful that whatever He promises, will be fulfilled. He promised the Jews His Spirit so they could live. He reminded them that it is only through the power of His Holy Spirit that they could live in happiness with Him for eternity.

In our second reading, Saint Paul in his letter to the Romans, continued with the same theme about the ‘awesome power of God.’ He said, it is only when we have the Spirit of God in us that we can please God. On the contrary, if we do not have the Spirit of God in us, we will be in the flesh and we will not be able to please God. It is the Spirit of God that gives us the power to act like Him. He said, it is by the amazing power of the Spirit that we are made children of God.

Paul said, though we are sinners because we have all sinned. However, if we have the Spirit of Christ in us, we would belong to God and we will be alive because of God’s righteousness. So, Paul enjoins us to keep our bodies pure as the temple of the Holy Spirit and God will fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, God would raise our bodies up on the last day through the power of the Holy Spirit.

 In our Gospel reading, we come across a story full of faith, hope, love, and the awesome power of God. Martha and Mary demonstrated their faith in Jesus by stating clearly that if Jesus was there earlier, their brother would not have died. They also demonstrated their faith and hope by noting that at the resurrection Lazarus would rise from the dead to live for eternity.

Jesus showed His love for all humanity when He shed tears of sorrow over the death of His beloved friend Lazarus on seeing others crying. In His love for humanity, and in His humanity, Jesus saw and felt how death affects us. He cried over our lack of their faith, just as He cried over the lack of faith the people of Jerusalem. Jesus cried because He came to set the world on fire and it is not yet ablaze. Jesus, then showed the awesome power of God by telling Lazarus to **“come out.”** Lazarus came out immediately to the amazement of the Jews.

John the evangelist described the scene at the burial ground of Lazarus in a similar way he later described the burial and resurrection of Jesus. His description showed the consistent custom of how Jews were buried during his time. We noticed that Lazarus was buried in a cave just as Christ would be buried in a cave.

We noticed that the there was a stone laid across the tomb just as Jesus’s tomb had a stone across it. John also described how Lazarus was buried with burial bands wrapped around his body just has Jesus’ body was wrapped. And a separate cloth wrapped around Lazarus’ face, just has Jesus had a separate cloth wrapped around His face.

The death of Lazarus prefigures the death of Christ. Just as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, so did God with His awesome power raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection was for eternity, while Lazarus died again and would be resurrected with a glorified body like Christ’s on the last day. Similarly, we too will die one day and be resurrected on the last day when our souls would be reunited with our glorified body.

Last week we heard about the story of the man born blind. We heard how with His awesome power, God, created eyes for the man born blind. This reminds us, that we were created from the dust of the earth. In a similar way, God with His amazing power raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for 4 days.

By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus reminds us of our mortality. And that through the awesome power of God, there would be another life after we pass from this world. We are reminded that the soul does not disappear into nothingness after it leaves a body.

As usual, some of the Jews who came to comfort Martha and Mary criticized Jesus for not doing something to keep Lazarus alive before he died. Jesus’ response was, as He told Martha, the death of Lazarus was for the glory of God to be manifested and that by the display of the awesome power of God the Jews would come to know that the Father sent Him. As we heard at the end of our Gospel reading, mission accomplished! We are told **“Many of the Jews … began to believe in Him.”** on seeing what He had done!

To us who are reading and hearing what is written in the Bible, do we believe in the whole Gospel as presented by the Church? Do we accept it as the word of God? Or do we choose what we want to believe to fit our lifestyle?

As we come with the utmost reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Jesus for more faith so we can truly belong to Him.