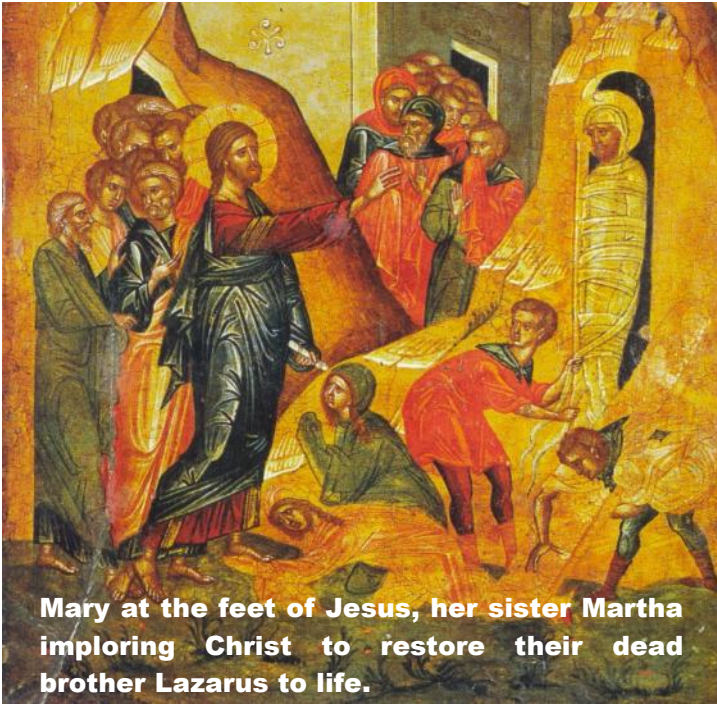


6th Week of Lent



The conclusion of Great Lent leads to the confrontation between Christ and death. Our Lord became friends with three siblings, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Martha represents those who are *self-led* and believe they know what is *important*. Busy with *doing* (as noble as serving is) Martha's inner life is full of anxiety and judgment – she complains to Jesus that her sister has left her to serve alone. Mary on the other hand, is at His feet, hearing words of Life and receiving that which cannot be taken away from her – a living faith in Christ!

When Jesus arrives, Lazarus had been dead four days. He is greeted by Martha. “Then Martha, when she heard that “Jesus is coming,” went to meet Him; but Mary was sitting in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, **if You were here, my brother would not have died.**” But even now I know that whatsoever **You Yourself shall ask of God, God will**

give it to You.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother shall rise up.” Martha said to Him, “I know that he shall rise up in the resurrection in the last day.” Jesus said to her, **“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believeth in Me, though he die, he shall live; and everyone who lives and believes in Me, in no wise shall ever die.** Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yea, Lord, I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who comes into the world.” And after she said these things, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, and said, “The Teacher is present and calls You [Jn. 11:20-28].” St. John Chrysostom points out that this conversation reveals that the sisters did not yet believe that Jesus was God or that he could act on His own power and authority. Jesus responds with teaching that He is the one with all power and authority to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Moments later, Mary arrives and falling at the feet of Jesus says the same words as her sister, *“Lord, if You were here, my brother would not have died (Jn. 11:21.)”* Here, no conversation takes place, she is bearing the full terror of the tragedy that death has brought to them. Her young brother, the protector of the parentless siblings lies dead in the tomb. Jesus also becomes deeply moved in spirit as he takes in the full impact of the tragedy and now shows His human nature, weeping at the devastation that death has wrought to the family He loves.

One of the last aspects of the human condition experienced by Christ is the inherent tragedy of personal human lost. A deep pain is felt in the soul when a beloved person is separated from us. Such tragedy reveals most profoundly our human condition as fallen, broken and in need of healing—this is precisely why Christ has come to save us. Some days later, it is Mary who now understands that Jesus has come to rescue us from this fallen condition and anoints the body of Jesus to prepare Him for His own confrontation with death on the Cross.

“Christ weeps at the grave of his friend (Lazarus), and in so doing He reveals His own struggle with death, His refusal to acknowledge it and to come to terms with it. Suddenly, death ceases to be a normal and natural

fact, it appears as something foreign, as unnatural, as fearsome and perverted, and it is acknowledged as an enemy (Schmemmann, O Death Where is Thy Sting?”).”

Holy Week— sitting at the feet of Christ on the Cross

The two sisters reveal two very different types of relationship with Christ. Martha’s relationship was based upon what Christ could *do* for her while Mary’s relationship was based upon being *with* Christ, at his feet, listening and hearing Him. Holy Week is about sitting at the feet of Christ hanging on the Cross and hearing Him, being silent and stopping all superfluous activities which we find so necessary, pressing and unavoidable. If Lent has accomplished anything, it will have conditioned our hearts to sit and be still at the *feet* of Holy Week.

Wednesday, April 13

Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 PM

Philoptochos Lenten Program 7 PM

Friday, April 15, Presanctified Liturgy 8:30 AM

Saturday, April 16, Matins 8:30 AM

Liturgy 9:30 AM

Pancake Breakfast & Palm Cross Making

Great Vespers 5 PM