

Homily 5th Sunday Lent Year A 2023

The raising of Lazarus is like a trailer for what is to come when Jesus will be laid in the tomb and is freed by God. But today's story helps us understand how Jesus wants to set us free from our sins, from all that prevents us from being the people we really want to be for God. In the sacrament of reconciliation Jesus wants to roll away the stones that block us from the good we want to do and to be. Jesus wants to unbind us just as Lazarus was freed from the sheets in which he was bound for burial. Having our sins forgiven is like having our face uncovered so that we can see more clearly how Jesus works in us through forgiveness. The sacrament helps us see and experience more deeply the love of those around us as Lazarus did when he was greeted with love from all those who had come to the tomb.

Macrina Wiederkehr osb wrote the following reflection for Easter Sunday which I have adapted to help us discover that the Sacrament of Reconciliation also offers us a resurrection experience.

Adapted from: **On Rolling Stones Away"**

Where are my stones?

What are their names?

Would I know them if I met them face to face?

Rolling stones is what it's all about but it has another name: Resurrection.

Be patient with each other's stones (Ephesians 4:1-3).

We will learn that Jesus will be gentle with Thomas' stone (John 20:24-29).

We will discover that Peter had to roll away stones in his life too (John 13:6-11).

The call continues.

We are called to help others roll away the stones that block them, entomb them, like Lazarus; to help them break out of their tombs.

Of course, that means we'll have to break forth from our own tombs first.

We'd look kind of silly preaching from the inside our own tombs, wouldn't we?