

retreat @home

***"Unbind him and
let him go"***

DAY 2: TUESDAY

"Unbind him and let him go"

PREPARE: Go to your chosen prayer place, settle down and become still. Take some deep breaths and slow your breathing. Relax and come to rest. God is here to meet with you.

OPEN: *I open my hands and say, "here I am God..."*
I open my ears and say, "I am listening God..."
I open my imagination and ask, "lead me God..."

ASK: Become aware of how you are feeling today, name those feelings out loud to God. Ask God for whatever you sense that you need in this time of prayer today. Be bold to ask - God loves to give.

GOSPEL READING: John 11:38-44

Read today's Gospel passage through slowly two or three times until you have a clear sense of its flow.

MEDITATION: You could continue the story from yesterday with the sisters or for something very different, try the perspective of Lazarus. We rarely pause to consider our own death (too fearful) but here is an opportunity to meet Jesus in the valley of death.

The last thing I remember is the sound of my sisters weeping and the grip of their hands holding mine. All strength had gone, nothing left, I couldn't even open my eyes. Every breath was a losing battle and then... no more. Darkness. A long sleep.

A voice startles me. My name, "Lazarus!" I'm awake. The voice ringing in the dark is a voice I know well, urgent, insistent. It is a summons, "Lazarus, come out!"

"Lord, I have no strength, it is dark, I am bound."

But the thunder of his voice shakes me, it shudders through me,

heart beat drums pound inside me, I gasp in air, lungs filling.

The sound of heavy stone grinding and grating, voices muffled outside. A shaft of light breaks the dark. A breath of wind whispers over me.

Silence. Everything waits on my response.

Can I move? Can I get to him?

I am bound up in grave clothes, tight and sticky with spice, but I am coming Lord, I am coming.

I cannot see, but I am going to the light. Freedom beckons me.

"Unbind him and let him go." The Beloved voice.

I stumble and tumble out "...unbind me, set me free..."

What will Lazarus see when the blindfolds are removed?
Who will step forward to unbind him?

What will Lazarus want to say to Jesus? To his sisters?
How will the rest of this day unfold?

How will Lazarus live his life, now it has been given back to him
and second time?

CONVERSATION: Coming out of your own imagining of the story, take a few moments to talk it over with God as if you were telling a friend about what just happened. What did you notice? What were the feelings that arose in you? Did anything surprise you? Was there anything uncomfortable? Do you sense yourself wanting to make any particular response?

ENDING: End your prayer, perhaps shaping one sentence that captures what you want to say to God. Move to somewhere different - make a hot drink - take a few moments to jot down your thoughts.

REVIEW & RELISH: If you are able to find another slot in your day, return to your prayer place, read the story and take the journey in your imagination once again. New things may emerge or you may simply find yourself relishing the earlier insights more deeply.

THREE KEY QUESTIONS:

HIS STORY - 'If you believe you will see the glory of God' - how does Jesus reveal the glory of God in this story?

OUR STORY - 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live' - how do these words sound in our ears as each day the news reports the number of deaths from Coronavirus?

MY STORY - How do I respond to the Voice of the Beloved calling me to come out? What grave-clothes still bind me? What freedom do I seek from Jesus?

CREATIVE IDEAS: Divide a piece of paper in two parts. Label one side 'The Tomb - Old Life' label the other side 'New Life - Freedom'. Start writing/drawing the words and images from your own life that emerged from this meditation today. What are you seeing now that you didn't see before?

RETREAT ON THE MOVE:

Make it personal, "Unbind me and let me go" carry these words around in your heart today... Notice any 'unfreedoms' and ask Jesus for his release.

EXPLORE FURTHER:

YouTube 'You came' (Lazarus)

Jonathan & Melissa Helser / Beautiful Surrender

Google 'Raising of Lazarus Icons' - what do you notice about these depictions of Lazarus and his sisters?



THE COMMUNITY OF THE
TREE OF LIFE

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Shaped by God