

Sunday 29th March

Read John 11.1-45

Reflection

Revd Ben Edwards (Curate)

Even the most casual of observers couldn't fail to draw comparisons with the current crisis we face and the reading today on the Raising of Lazarus. It almost feels as if our way of life has died, and we have descended into a tomb of sorts. However, we also know that, like Lazarus, we shall be raised to life again, and 'this too shall pass', as we are often reminded on social media feeds.

This is all well and good, and it shall indeed pass, but the comparison with the story of Lazarus doesn't quite do it for me. Because on the face of it, Jesus raises Lazarus to the same life he had left. Do we wish to emerge from this period of history the same as when we entered it?

Lazarus's experience would have profoundly altered his way of life – indeed everyone who mourned for him and bore witness to the glory of God in his raising from the dead would have changed...wouldn't they?

Lazarus was rescued from death, but in order for him to truly live, the life he had regained needed to participate in a whole *new* way of living. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life – no-one comes to the Father except through me".

The comparison we should look to make with our current isolation and the return to community that we look forward to is with the Resurrection of Christ.

That, by the grace of God, when we emerge from the tomb of isolation our society will become something new, something that can leave behind all that which frustrated and stymied human flourishing.

That we emerge from the tomb not trusting in the false virtues of wealth, the glamour of fame or the idea that success is found in material things.

That we emerge from the tomb with new, fresh eyes to see the true importance of togetherness, kindness, beauty, community and love.

This will be a raising into Resurrection – not just a *restoration* to how things were, but a *transformation* into something new, and something far closer to the God in whose image we are made. Jesus *is* Resurrection – and through Resurrection we will draw closer to our true selves, closer to that image of God.

In the story of Lazarus, we do not only marvel in the miracle of restoring the dead to life, but we also see that the story signposts us to the Resurrection. Let us, as we approach Easter, contemplate the hope of Resurrection in our common life together, and when we arise from the tomb, may we be made new, transformed, and closer to the image of God than ever.