

## *Fifth Sunday of Lent – 3/9*

"Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone." (John 11:39-41)

In the 1940's film *The Song of Bernadette* there is a scene in which Bernadette is asked by our Lady to wash in the spring that is located at the site of the grotto. As Bernadette looks around she sees no spring. She proceeds to kneel down on the ground and to dig in the dirt. The ground is muddy but there is still no spring. Finally she picks up the mud and washes her face with it. Of course, her parents pull her up and start to hurry her away from the area. They are concerned that the people watching will think that their daughter is mad. As they leave the grotto one man looks back to where Bernadette had been digging. Water flows freely. The water of Lourdes still springs up from this same place today.

Bernadette did not follow the instructions of the beautiful Lady because she expected to see the glory of God. She simply believed in the Lady. She did not doubt what those around her could not understand. Because she believed, miracles continue to take place at this grotto.

Martha knew Jesus well. She knew about the many miracles that He had performed. She believed that if Jesus had arrived sooner then Lazarus would not have died. Now Jesus asks her to take another step in faith. Martha is asked to believe that which is truly unbelievable. Practical Martha knows that in the heat of the region it doesn't take long for a body to decay. Perhaps if Jesus had gotten there right after he died she might have hope, but certainly not after four days.

Jesus then asks Martha to remember that if she believes, if she allows herself to risk being foolish then God will amaze her. Martha is being asked to stretch her heart so that she can embrace the impossible. She may not understand but Martha does want to grow in faith so she orders the stone turned aside.

Bernadette and Martha risked being foolish because they were asked to do so. God also asks us to step beyond the rational so that faith can flourish. The question is, can we?

### *Reflection Questions*

- 1. What step is Jesus asking me to take, however foolish it may seem?*
- 2. How might my heart be stretched if I heed His call?*

*Prayer: Jesus, may I always respond to Your call to grow in faith and may Your glory shine through my actions. Amen.*